

THE
CHRISTIAN'S
Great Concern
of
SALVATION.

By *K.*
THOMAS HALYBURTON.

EDINBURGH.

1722.

CHRISTIAN

GRACE

OF

RAILROAD

BY

THOMAS HALL

EDUCATED

1850



AN
Introductory SERMON

ON

ACTS x. 29.

*I ask therefore for what Intent ye have
sent for me.*



HAVING the Formality of an
Introduction, I shall lay before
you a few Remarks for clearing
the Occasion of the Apostle's us-
ing this Question, and the Reason
why we have made Choice of
this Text at this Time for the Subject of this
Discourse. And,

1. This Chapter contains a large and par-
ticular Account of one *Cornelius* a *Roman* Centu-
rion, or Captain of an hundred Soldiers, his
Conversion to Christianity.

2. *Cornelius*, tho' by Birth a *Roman*, was of the
Jewish Religion, a Profelyte. These who of
other

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other Nations embraced the true Religion, associating themselves to the *Jews*, were called Proselytes: And they were either such as joyned with the *Jews* in the whole Rites of their Religion, being circumcised as were the *Jews*; or such as adhered to the Substantials of their Religion, but remained uncircumcised. The former Sort were called Proselytes of *Righteousness*, or of the Covenant; the latter, Proselytes of the *Gate*. Interpreters seem agreed that *Cornelius* was a Proselyte of the *Gate*, one who owned the Substance of Religion, but remained uncircumcised, and did not joyn in the Whole of their Worship.

3. This Captain was a true Convert before this Discovery of the Gospel came to him by the Apostle: He was accepted of God, and therefore was not to be accounted unclean. Now none save these who are converted can be accepted; for *they that are in the Flesh cannot please God; and without Faith 'tis impossible to please him; for he that comes to him must believe that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Hebr. xi. 6. Wherefore,

4. He, no doubt, lean'd upon the promised Messiah *Jesus Christ* for his Acceptance with God, since *none can come to the Father but by him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and who only can guide Sinners in their Approaches to GOD*.

5. GOD being a Rewarder of such as diligently seek him, did reward this Man's Faith and Obedience with the Gospel Revelation of his Son *Jesus Christ*, whence he came to understand that

that the Messiah he looked for, was already come. His Prayers and Alms-deeds are said to come up for a Memorial before GOD; not as if there had been any Thing of Merit in what was done or attained to, but to encourage others, and discover the Riches of GOD's Bounty, in rewarding freely, according to his rich Grace, the diligent Improvement of Light with greater Degrees of Light and Life; and this Reward is not of *Debt*, but of rich and sovereign *Grace*.

6. This Saint waiting for the *Consolation of Israel*, has a Vision from GOD, bidding him send for the Apostle *Peter*: Whence we may learn, That GOD has a great Respect for his own Institutions. The Gospel Ministry is of divine Appointment, and therefore the LORD refers *Cornelius* to it, tho' it had been no less easy to have discovered *Christ* to him in the Vision.

7. *Peter* has a Vision to the same Purpose, removing such Objections as might make him scruple: Whence we may remark, That when the Lord designs Good to a People, by a Minister, he gives both the People Clearness to call, and the Minister Clearness to come; tho' not in such an extraordinary Manner as this here made use of.

8. When the Apostle, in Compliance with *Cornelius* his Call, and GOD's Call, or rather the LORD's joyning in the same Call with him, comes to the Place where he was; the first Question he puts to him is that which we have read to you: *I ask therefore for what Intent you have sent for me*; and this he doth notwithstanding he had

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got some Account of this from the Servants who were sent for him by *Cornelius*.

The Words are in themselves plain, and therefore we shall not offer any Explication of them, but lay before you this Doctrine, which is palpably contained in them. That

A faithful Gospel Minister coming among a People upon their Call will be very desirous to know what their Designs in calling him were, I ask therefore for what Intent you have sent for me

In discoursing this Point, we shall enquire,
1. *What Design a People should have in calling a Gospel Minister.* 2. *What way they should evidence these to be their Designs.* 3. *Make some Enquiry into the Reasons of the Doctrine.* And, lastly, apply the Whole.

To begin with the *First* of these, *The Designs a People should have in calling a Gospel Minister, are many.* We shall endeavour to reduce them to a few. And,

1. *A People should, in calling a Gospel Minister, design to hear from him the whole Counsel of God in reference to their eternal Salvation.* This is the great Business of Gospel Ministers, to declare the whole Counsel of God to these to whom they come, to keep nothing back from them that may be of Use to them. So their Commission runs, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the End of the World, Amen.* And the
great

great Apostle of the Gentiles, in that famous farewell Sermon of his to the Church of *Ephesus*, which we have recorded *Acts* xx. from the 17. and downward, appeals to the Conscience of that People as to his Faithfulness in fulfilling his Commission in declaring to them the *whole Counsel of God*, Verse 27. *And in keeping back nothing that could be profitable to them*, Ver. 20. Whoever would approve himself a faithful Gospel Minister, must take Care faithfully to discover to his Hearers their *lost and undone State* by Nature, that they are all become guilty before GOD, and that there is no other Way of their obtaining *Access* to him but through *Jesus Christ*, who is made of God to them who believe *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*. To these Two doth the Apostle refer the whole of that Counsel of GOD. He shunned not to declare to the *Ephesians* in that forecited Scripture *Acts* xx. 21. He testify'd to all Persons, *Jews and Greeks*, Repentance towards GOD (*i. e.* that they were guilty of such Offences against God, as called for deep Humiliation) and Faith toward our Lord *Jesus Christ*, *that is*, that there was no Way of escaping the Wrath of GOD, but that of closing with *Christ* by Faith. This is the Matter of the Gospel: And *Christ's* Servants are to make it their Business faithfully to unfold the Mind of GOD in reference to these Two, Man's State by *Nature*, and what he may by *Grace* be advanced to. This is called 1 *Tim.* v. 17. *a labouring in the Word and Doctrine*.

This Preaching of the Gospel takes in Three Things. 1. A full Proposal of the Doctrine just

now mentioned. Ministers must, without mincing the Matter, plainly discover to Men their lost State, and the Impossibility of Recovery any other Way than by the Gospel Method, thro' *Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 21.* 2. They must discover these Things, not as their *private Sentiments* built upon some rational Conclusions of their own drawing and framing, but as the *Word of God.* 'Tis the Word of GOD they are to propose, and not their own private Opinions; and 'tis the Word of GOD Hearers are to receive from them, *1 Thess. ii. 13. For this Cause also thank we God, saith the Apostle, without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in Truth) the Word God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* 3. This preaching of the Word takes in not only a Proposal of the Word of GOD, but an *authoritative Declaration* of it by virtue of a *Commission* derived from GOD. *These Things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority, Tit. ii. 15.* The Word in the first Language may be rendred Command, with all Command. Ministers are clothed with Authority from GOD, and in his Name, by virtue of a Commission received from him, they are to preach the Gospel, and to speak the Counsel of GOD, as being his Mouth to the People, *1 Pet. iv. 11.* This is the principal Part of the Ministers Work, and therefore to *hear* the Word of God from them in this Manner should be the great Design of these who call a Gospel Minister, that they may hear from them as the Mouth of God, what by Nature they are, and what through the

the Grace of GOD in *Christ Jesus* they may be.
But now,

2. When a People call a Gospel Minister, they should design *the regular and orderly Performance of the Worship of GOD*. This Worship of GOD, as 'tis contradistinguished from the Doctrine of the Gospel, of which under the former Head, consists principally in the *Administration of the Sacraments and Prayer, publick Prayer*, I mean, under which *Praises* are comprehended, as belonging to, and always to be joyned with it, according to our blessed LORD's Appointment in that Form, commonly called the *LORD's Prayer*, which concludes with *Thanksgiving*. In that ii. of the *Acts* 42. we have an Account of the publick Worship of the Church, which consists in preaching, there expressed by *Doctrine*, and *breaking of Bread*, that is, administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and *Prayers and Praises*. And they, saith the Spirit of God speaking of the Church, *continued in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers*. And Ver. 47. *Praising God*. The Celebration of the Sacraments, publick Prayers and Praises, are divine Institutions for the Salvation and Edification of the Church, which cannot be gone about or orderly performed without a Gospel Ministry, who only have Commission to celebrate the Sacraments, and to be the Mouth of the People to GOD, in their publick Assemblies, being furnished with spiritual Gifts for the Work, *Matth. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 23. and xiv. 16*. And therefore, when a People call a Gospel Minister, they should have this in View, as

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one great Design, that thereby they may have the Gospel Worship celebrated among them in all its Parts, according to *Christ's* Institution, to their spiritual Advantage, and his Glory.

3. They should call a Gospel Minister to rule over them. This is one Part of the Minister's Work, to rule over his Flock 1. *Tim. v. 17. Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.* This Superiority which Gospel Ministers have, is not a lordly Dominion either over the Persons or Faith of their Flock. No, any Thing of this Sort that ever crept into the Church, had its Rise from the Subtilty of Satan, who envied its Peace, and is directly opposite to the Gospel, which forbids lordly Dominion, the Gospel Ministers Authority being given only for *Edification and not for Destruction*, as the Apostle has it 2 *Cor. x. 8.* And it consists, 1. in an authoritative Publication of the Laws of *Christ's* House. 2. In an authoritative Enforcement of them by a ministerial Offer of the Gospel Privileges as the Rewards of Obedience. And, 3. in a Power to inflict, according to *Christ's* Appointment, the Gospel Punishments upon the Disobedient, the highest whereof is *Excommunication*, whereby the Disobedient are delivered over to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus, as the Apostle has it 1 *Cor. v. 5.* And to one of these Three Ends might all be reduced, according to the common Distinction of Gospel Ordinances in Doctrine, Worship and Government: But that you may the better understand this

this Matter, we shall name some more particular Designs: And therefore we say,

4. A People, in calling a Gospel Minister, should design *the closing of a Bargain, and making a Match with Christ upon his own Terms.* 'Tis the Work and Business they are sent out for, to espouse Sinners to Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 2. to woo a Bride for the Lamb. They have a Commission as Abraham's Servant had, to go and seek a Wife for their Master's Son; and these who call them, should do it in order to the Conclusion of this happy Match, that from them they may hear the Terms whereon they are to be admitted into this near Relation, the Advantages that shall accrue to them by it, the Inconveniencies they will run themselves into by a Refusal, and the Warrant they have to enter into so high and honourable a Relation.

5. They should design *their own Furtherance in Acquaintance with Christ.* They should as new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. that they may be furthered in their Joy and Faith, growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. They should design *their own Establishment in the Ways of God*, that they may not be tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, but that being rooted and grounded in the Faith, they may grow up in all Things to him who is the Head and Saviour of the Body. This is expressly declared to be the Design of the Ministry, Ephes. iv. 11. The Apostle having spoken of Christ's Exaltation, and his having received Gifts for Men, tells us of him in this Verse and the following, *That he gave*
some

Some Apostles, some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ ; till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Know'edge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ : That we henceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrin, by the Slight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they ly in wait to deceive, &c. And to the same Purpose speaks the Spirit of God frequently elsewhere of the Design of the Ministry. Paul, Rom. i. 11. expresseth his earnest Desire to see them, and to impart some spiritual Gift unto them, to the end they may be established. These who are already engaged in God's Ways should design their own Establishment in them in their calling a Gospel Minister.

7. They should design *their own Direction through all the Difficulties of Religion.* The Lord's People have many dark Steps in their Way : Sometimes they are under *Temptation*, and know not how to carry ; sometimes they are engaged in a *closs Fight* with their Adversaries, and know not how to wield their spiritual Armour to Advantage ; sometimes they are *out of the Way*, and know not how to get into it again : And therefore they need some to *guide* them into the Meaning of GOD's Word ; for how can they understand unless they be taught, *Acts viii. 31. How can I understand, says the Ethiopian Eunuch, un'ess some Man should guide me :* And who should guide them but these who are *Guides by Office*, as the Word may be rendred, *Heb. xiii. 8. Consider them who have*

have the Rule over you, or who are your Guides. This is the End a Gospel Ministry is promised for. Isa. xxx. 21. And tho' the Lord give you the Bread of Adversity, and the Water of Affliction, yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into Corners any more, but thine Eyes shall see thy Teachers : And thine Ears shall hear a Voice behind thee, saying, This is the Way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the Right Hand, and when ye turn to the Left. 'Tis impossible we should condescend on all the particular Intentions or Ends a People should propose to themselves in Calling a Gospel Minister ; and therefore we shall conclude all in this one, which is sure to comprehend them.

8. They should seek to have one who may answer in some-Measure Timothy's Character, with respect to the Church of the Philippians, Phil. ii. 20. *one who may naturally take Care of them, that is, one who may, out of Love to their Souls, affectionately, prudently, careful'y, and with impartial Boldness, open and apply the Word, dispense the Sacraments, and administer Discipline, for the Instruction of the Ignorant, strengthening the Weak, comforting the Disconsolate, affecting the Impenitent, reproofing the Faulty, recovering Wanderers, directing and helping forward those who doubt and halt; that he may both save himself and them, to the Praise of the Glory of God's Grace.* We shall not insist upon each of these Particulars, which would require not One or Two, but many Sermons, which suits not our present Design. We shall therefore proceed, in the

Second Place, to enquire how a People should make it appear that they were acting upon these Designs in their

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their calling a Gospel Minister. This Enquiry might be understood either to respect their own Satisfaction, or the Satisfaction of *the World*, or of the Minister himself, as to this Matter; but Time not allowing us to be so particular, we shall hold the Enquiry in the general, and in Answer to it we say.

1. A People should discover their Designs to be such as we have mentioned, by a *punctual Attendance upon all the Ordinances*, to be by him dispensed in publick or private. Thus we see it was with *Cornelius*; he not only waited on himself, but he called together these on whom he had any Influence. *And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his Kinsmen and near Friends, Acts x. 24.* These who will not give Attendance to the publick Dispensation of the Word, and the private Instructions, either *family* or *personal*, but withdraw, we cannot think these Persons had the right End before them in calling a Gospel Minister: Surely had they been right in their Aims, they would have been ready to say with *Cornelius*, We are all here present, &c.

2. They should not only present their Bodies upon such Occasions, but they should *list themselves as in God's Sight, to hear all Things whatever are commanded of God by his Servants.* *We are all here present,* says *Cornelius* to *Peter*, *to hear all Things that are commanded thee of God,* Ver. 33. to give Attendance to the Ordinances, either more publick or private, on any other Design than this, is to *offer the Sacrifice of Fools*, contrary to that Injunction of the wise Man, *Eccles.*

Eccles. v. 1. Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the Sacrifice of Fools. When we come to GOD's Ordinances, we must come to hear what he speaks to us.

3. They should evidence the Honesty of their Designs, by obeying the Word which they hear at his Mouth; they should comply with all the Commands of GOD, and say to their Minister as the People of Israel said to Moses, *Deut. v. 27. Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it.* For as the Apostle James well observes, *'Tis not the Hearer of the Word but the Doer who is blessed of God,* James i. 25. As we must hear and do, so our Attendance must not be limited, but our Ear must be opened to Reproofs, and the most terrible Denunciations of Wrath from God, as well as to the sweet Promises and charming Discoveries of the Glory of Christ, the Beauties of Religion, the surprizing Happiness of the Saints in Heaven; and there must not only be Obedience to these Commands which may bring in Honour, external Gain and Pleasure by our Compliance, but these also must be obeyed, which may bring us under the Lash of wicked Mens Tongues, and expose us to Reproach, Hazard and Ignominy in the World. *All Things whatever are commanded of God must be punctually obeyed without Reserve.*

4. There must be a Submitting to all the Ordinances of God. Both this Obedience and Submission

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mission you'll find spoken of, *Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as those who must give an Account, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief : For this is unprofitable for you.* The Word rendred *obey*, signifies properly a Believing upon Perswasion, and respects our Belief of the Truths proposed by them, and a Compliance with our Duty that way ; and on the other Hand this Submission has a respect to the Power they have over their People for *Edification* and not for *Destruction*, that is, that Authority they have for admonishing, reprov- ing, rebuking, and censuring Offenders ; and by a Submission to them in the Dispensation of these Ordinances of *Christ*, *Reproof* and *Censure* I mean, they are to evidence to all the Upright- ness and Christian Sincerity of their Designs.

5. They are to evidence their Designs to be justifiable by a *careful Diligence in applying to their Minister upon all Occasions* ; when they are under Difficulties, when they are in the dark as to Duty, when they have to do with Corrup- tions which they cannot get mastered, when under the Lord's Hand, and so of all other Exigencies of the like Nature. For as the *Priest's Lips should preserve or keep Knowledge*, so the *People should ask the Law at his Mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. ii. 7.* and these who are sick, are bid *send for the El- ders or Minister of the Church to pray over them.* *Jam. v. 14.* These who have the Advantage of a Gospel Minister, are indispensably obliged to acquaint him with the State of their Souls, when

when there is any Thing peculiar in it, and when they are reduced to any Strait or Extremity; and that, 1. Because GOD has laid it upon them as a Duty in that forecited *Mal. ii. 7. The People should ask the Law at his Mouth.* 2. Because otherwise he will be at a loss in his bringing Messages to you, if he mistake your Case, or be unacquainted with it; how can he direct you if he understand not your State and Condition? The LORD gives no immediate Revelation now, we have no Warrant to expect any such Thing; and therefore the Way wherein Ministers ordinarily come to understand their People's Condition, is by themselves, who upon this Ground are called to have Recourse to their Ministers. 3. They should acquaint their Ministers with their Circumstances, because they are the People's Mouth to GOD; and if they be not acquainted with the Circumstances and Condition of the Flock, how shall they, according to their Duty, hold up the Case of their People to God, as they are indispensably obliged to do, and that both in publick, and secret, and private?

6. Once more, and we have done, a People may, and should prove their Intentions honest, by a *diligent Application to their own proper Work and Business*; with respect to his *Furtherance* in these great Designs. Every Member of the Congregation should be helpful to him, in contributing their utmost Assistance to him in his Work. A Minister may spend *his Strength in vain*, if Elders in their Place, Masters of Families in theirs, and every particular Person in his Station, don't joyn by Prayer and otherwise, in
assist-

assisting their Ministers. Then do Men appear sincere in their Designs, for the Glory of God, and their *own Salvation*, when every one puts to his Hand to the Work, and endeavours the Removeal of what may retard and obstruct its Progress and Success; and likewise studies by all Means to strengthen the Minister's Hands, that he may not be discouraged, diverted, or taken off from his Work. In fine, then do a People appear single in their Aims, when their Words, their Hearts, their Hands, go *one Way*, and all they do is levelled at the Ends mentioned, the *Glory of God*, in the *Conversion, Edification, and Salvation of Souls*. I proceed no w

Thirdly. To enquire into the *Reasons of the Doctrine*, why a faithful Gospel Minister coming amongst a People, will be *careful* to understand their Design or Intent in calling him. And,

1. This will be the Desire of a Gospel Minister, because a *Mistake* in this Matter will be of very *dangerous Consequence* to the People. That People may be influenced by wrong and sinister Ends and Motives in this Matter, is beyond all Peradventure. They may design the *Gratification of their itching Ears* by the Preacher's Gifts, as the Prophet *Ezekiel's* Hearers did; they may seek the Gospel Ordinances for a *Charm* as it were, that they may sit down and rest upon them, as many People do, like these with whom the Prophet *Jeremiah* had to do, who said, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*. Or they may design the *strengthening of Factions and Parties*; or to get *Occasion to mock*, as many do now in our Days. These and the like

like finistrous Designs may a People go upon : and there can be nothing more prejudical to a People than to be under the Influence of such Intentions ; since, past all Peradventure, G O D will not sit with such an Affront as is done him by this Means, when that Ordinance of the *Ministry*, which he designed for the Good of Souls, and his Glory, is *prostitute* and made subservient to quite different, nay *opposite* Designs : and surely a faithful Gospel-minister, who will have a tender Regard to the Salvation of his People, cannot choose but be solicitous to understand that they are not in so dangerous a Mistake.

2. The Knowledge of this will be of great Use to *clear his Call*. 'Tis a great Evidence that G O D designs Good to a People when they call a Minister upon such Designs ; and it cannot but go a great length towards his Satisfaction as to G O D's calling him to work among them, in order to the compassing the great Designs of his Ministry. When *Peter* got the Account before spoken of from *Cornelius*, he is further confirmed as to the Hand of G O D in his coming to him, in Compliance with his Desire.

3. If upon Enquiry they be found to be such as we have mentioned, it will be a great Comfort to him, in *grappling with the Difficulties* he may meet with in the Discharge of his Duty. It will give a great deal of Satisfaction to him to know that these, for whose sakes he runs those Hazards, and grapples with these Difficulties, have the same Aims, and are joyning in the same

Design with him. *In fine*, the right Managment of his whole Work depends very much upon this Knowledge of his People's Intentions; and therefore 'tis no Wonder he be inquisitive into them, since by his Acquaintance with these he may be capacitate to further both his own and their Salvations.

We might, for *Improvement* of this Point, discourse to you at length of the Necessity of a Gospel Minister's enquiring into his own *Designs*, in undertaking the Charge of a People. The Arguments made Use of to discover the Reasonableness of enquiring after the *People's Designs*, conclude no less strongly with respect to the Minister's. We might likewise discourse to you of the way how he is to manifest the Integrity and Sincerity of his Aims; but Time will not allow us to enter upon these Things, and you heard the Minister's Duty so fully and largely discoursed of within these few Days, *viz.* at the *Ordination*, that we judge it needless to enter upon that Subject, and therefore all the Improvement we design of what has been said shall be dispatched in a short Address to you of this Cogregation.

You have called me to labour among you in the Work of the Gospel; upon your Call I have come; I ask therefore to what Intent sent ye for me? What did ye design in this Matter? was it to hear what GOD has to say to you, that GOD's Worship may be ordered according to his own Appointment, that you may be brought to Acquaintance with Christ, or that you be established in his Ways. Were these
and

and the like, the Designs you had in View? Were these the Motives influenced you? If you narrowly look into you own Hearts, and make an impartial Enquiry, you may readily come to understand what your Aims have been; and for your Help I would only in GOD's Name pose your Consciences with a Question or Two that may be of Use. 1. Dare you without Heart-condemning, as in the Sight of GOD, say, that in calling a Minister, you had *Respect* to the *Command* of GOD? Was it Duty that mov'd you, or did Custom, and your own Ease influence you? 2. Dare you hold up your Faces and say, that it was a *Taste* of GOD's Goodness in Ordinances, that made you desire them, that you might grow thereby? 3. Did this Desire lead you much to the Throne of Grace to *pray* for a Minister, that God might send you one *according to his own Heart, that might feed you with Knowledge and Understanding*? 4. When you saw any Prospect of the Return of your Prayers, as to a Gospel Ministry, were you careful to plead that the Blessing might come along.

What say you to these Things? Give God, give Conscience Justice; let Conscience speak freely, and tell whether Things be so or not. They must either own that there was not a Regard to the Command, that there was not a Desire after the sincere Milk of the Word, occasioned by a Taste of the Lord's Goodness, that there was not that serious Application to God by Prayer, either for a Minister, or for the Blessing of the Ordinance; or that there was; and this will cast you all into Two Classes. 1. These who

have not been so employed in this Matter, and consequently have not been acting for right Ends. And 2dly. These who have been busied in Duty, in the Way just now mentioned. To each of these a Word. And,

First. As for you who have not had a Regard to your Duty in this Matter, who have not been wrestling with GOD in Prayer, that GOD might send you a Minister, with the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel. To you we say,

1. Your Designs are not such as GOD will approve of. Had they been such as we mentioned in the former Part of this Discourse, then surely they would have led you to earnest Wrestling with GOD, for his Direction, who only can point to one that's meet to answer these blessed Ends.

2. You are guilty of horrible Wickedness. You have committed a great Provocation, in calling a Minister upon any other Design. GOD designed them for the Ends formerly mention'd, and no other; and your calling them upon other Aims, is an Endeavour to counteract GOD, prostitute his Ordinance, and serve your Lusts of that which GOD designed for his own Glory.

3. Whatever Good others may get by the Gospel; you have no Reason to look for any. GOD may answer you according to the Idols of your own Hearts; and when he satisfies the Soul of the hungry with good Things, he may send Leanness to you. When he gives a Commission to the Word to enlighten, convert, confirm and strengthen others, you have Reason to fear it may

may have a Commission, to make you blind, deaf, and dead.

4. Repent therefore of this your Wickedness, and pray GOD, if perhaps, the Thoughts of your Heart may be forgiven you; ly in the Dust before GOD, endeavour to get your Hearts affected with your Guilt, that ye may be deeply humbled and abased before him whom you have provoked to Anger.

5. Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance. Let us know by your Carriage that you are really penitent, and that now you have got the right Designs in View; and this you may do by a close Attendance upon all the Ordinances, by hearing and doing whatever is enjoyned you of GOD, and by all the other Ways mention'd in the doctrinal Part of this Discourse.

6. And lastly. Whether you hear or forbear, yet we tell you, the Kingdom of God is come near unto you; whatever you design, the Lord has given you a Gospel-day; and if our Gospel be hid from you, it is because you are lost, the GOD of this World having blinded your Eyes, that you should not discern the Light of the glorious Gospel of *Jesss Christ*, who is the Image of GOD.

As to the *second* Sort of Persons, these who have been importunate with GGD, and have had an Eye to his Command in this Work. To you we say,

1. This your Conduct, past all Peradventure, is no mean Evidence of the Sincerity of your good Intentions; and this is certainly Matter of Thankfulness, and is moreover a Ground to

hope, that the Lord may not altogether frustrate your Desires.

2. Do not think your Work is over. Wrestle, plead strongly with GOD for the Blessing of Gospel-ordinances; whoever plants or waters, tis only GOD that gives the Increase; and therefore, if you mean to grow under the Means, be instant in Prayer for the Blessing of them; plead that GOD may not send Leanness to your Souls, while he provides Plenty of spiritual Provision for you.

3. Beware of sitting down upon Gospel-privileges. You may, if you do so, lose what you have wrought, and justly bring the Sincerity of your Aims in question. There is Nothing more ordinary, than upfitting of this Sort. Persons, who it may be would say, O had they a Gospel-dispensation! how glad would they be, how carefully would they improve it; and yet when they get what they seek, their Improvement is in no Measure answerable to their Resolutions; take heed of, and guard against this.

4. Let there be a suitable Care to evidence your Sincerity in this Matter, by the whole of your *Department*. If you turn careless in attending Ordinances, if you hear, but do not, if you neglect your own Work, and be wanting to your selves in this Matter; then who will believe your Sincerity? Who can believe it? your own Consciences will accuse you; and *If your Hearts condemn you, GOD is greater than your Hearts, and knows all Things.* 1 John 3. 20.

5. If you find that the LORD has made Endeavours successful, take Care that you sacrifice

face not to your own Net, and burn Incense to your Drag. GOD is a holy and jealous GOD, and will not be mocked; and if you begin to rob him of his Glory, he will get him. Glory in such a Way, as may lay you low, and make you smart severely for your own Folly.

6. If the LORD give you the Gospel Light, then walk in the Light while you have it. Carry like Children of the Light and of the Day, work out the Work of your Salvation with Fear and Trembling; for none of us can tell how soon our Gospel Day may be gone, and the Night succeed, wherein none can work.

We shall conclude this Discourse with a few general Advices to all of you. Would you have our Ministry made successful? would you obtain the real Advantage of Gospel Ordinances, and have our Meeting such as may be Matter of Rejoycing both to you and me in the Day of the LORD? then we intreat, beseech, nay, and obtest you by the Mercies of GOD, in the Bowels of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as you would have your own Souls and ours to be saved.

1. Pray for us. As a Minister is indispensably obliged to mind his People before GOD, and to carry them ever upon his Heart, so are they obliged to pray for their Minister. *Pray for us*, says the Apostle, *Heb. 13. 18. for we trust we have a good Conscience in all Things, willing to live honestly*: And to make this Advice have the more Weight, I shall lay before you a few Considerations. And

(1.) Consider, Ministers are not sufficient of themselves for this Work; the Work is

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great, weighty and important, and the Difficulties are many ; and who is sufficient for it ? Sure Ministers are not ; for if the Apostle said with Justice of himself, *That he was not of himself sufficient to think any Thing as he ought,* 2 Cor. 3.

5. Then much more may Gospel Ministers now a Days own it to be so with them ; and therefore all their Sufficiency is only of GOD, from whom suitable and needful Supplies should be sought.

(2.) Consider, that in their Plenty and Fulness you shall have Plenty. They are indispensably obliged to lay out what they receive for you, to spend and be spent in the Work and Service of your Faith ; and therefore 'tis your Interest that they abound, since 'tis like to turn to a good Account to you ; and the more so, if you be instrumental by your Prayers, in procuring Advantages and Supplies for them.

(3.) Consider, that they are exposed to great Hazards for your sake, and therefore you are to contribute your utmost to their Assistance this Way, wherein you may be most helpful to them. They being made Watchmen, do thereby become the Butt of Satan's Malice ; and the more faithful they are, the more will he oppose them and seek their Ruin. The Enemy's principal Design is sure to be against the Watchman, because he prevents the Surprising of his People by Satan, at least 'tis his Business to do so ; and therefore no Stone will be left unturned, in order to his Ruin. 1. Satan will endeavour to lay him asleep, to make him turn secure, that he may neglect his Post. 2. If he miss of this, he

will

will endeavour to fill him with Disturbance and Fear, that so he may be diverted from his Duty, and made to quite his Post. Or, 3. He will ply his Corruptions, that he may, by attending to them, and striving against them, take him off from, or discourage him in his Opposition to those of others. 4. He will endeavour to blind his Eyes by false Appearances, that so he may give false Alarms; and this will weaken his Credit, and make People not believe his Warnings. 5. He will endeavour to amuse him with great Appearances of Danger, where there is none; that his Eyes may turn off from these Things which really endanger his Flock. And, 6. He will endeavour to beget and cherish Jealousies 'twixt his People and him, whereby his Warnings will be less regarded, and his Hands be weakned, and his Heart discouraged. 7. If these fail, he will endeavour to get him removed; if he see the Gospel like to prove successful, then he will take Care to find out Ways, to oblige the Watchman to remove from his Post. And, 8. If he fail of this, he will endeavour to kill him, either by multiplying Troubles and Grievs, or else by more direct Methods, employing his Emissaries and Servants to take away his Life; and this by God's Permission, for the Punishment of a People's Sins, has proven successful. Surely these and a great many more Methods, used by Satan, the wicked World, pretended Friends, and their own Corruptions, against the Ministers of the Gospel, and all upon the People's account, should make them careful in praying to GOD in their behalf, that they may be

be saved from the Attempts of all their spiritual Adversaries, and may be made to grow in Grace and Gifts. Pray for much Grace to your Minister, that he may perswade, as knowing the Terrors of the LORD; that he may deal tenderly with you, as having himself had Acquaintance with Soul-sickness, on account of Sin; that he may take you to *Jesus* safely, as having himself been with him; that he may comfort you with the Consolations wherewith he has been comforted of GOD. In fine, that he may speak, because he himself has not only believed, but experienced the Work of Grace upon his own Soul, as one that has tasted that Sin is an evil and bitter Thing, and has found, that *Christ* is useful, is sufficient, is precious, and that he may pray acceptably for you, as one who has found Acceptance in his own behalf. Pray likewise for Gifts to him, Knowledge in the Mystery of GOD, and of *Christ*, and of Faith; that he may have much spiritual Wisdom, Zeal, Boldness and Courage, to fit him for his Work; and withal, that the LORD may give a Door of Utterance.

(4.) Consider, that a careful Attendance to your Duty, in holding up your Minister's Case, will be a great Mean to promote Love, mutual Love betwixt you and him; and this will help to break Satan's Engines. Nothing contributes more to the Furtherance and Success of one's Ministry in a Place, than much Love, mutual Kindness 'twixt Minister and People; and no Love so useful this Way, as that which vents
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it self in Prayer for one another, and is cherished by this Means. But,

2. I intreat you may carefully attend Ordinances, the Preaching of the Word, publick Prayers and Praises, and Catechising, as the LORD shall give Occasion. This will make us cheerfully go about these Duties, if we see you studying to make Advantage of them : This will be profitable to you ; it will discourage our Enemies ; it will rejoyce our Heart, and be a Credit to Religion.

3. Any Advantage you receive, be sure that ye attribute it entirely to GOD ; beware of placing it to the Minister's Account, who is only the Instrument : If you rob GOD of the Glory, and give it to the Instrument, you may by this provoke the LORD to blast your Minister, and to withdraw from him his Presence ; which will soon make you see, that 'tis not the Minister that can do any Thing. Give GOD his Due, and so account of us as the Servants of *Christ*, and the Stewards of the Mysteries of the Gospel ; and when ye get any Good by it, put it all to GOD's Account, bless him for it ; and let the Instrument have an Interest in your Affections and Prayers, that he may be further useful to you and others.

4. Once more and we have done. Do not count us your Enemies, if we tell you the Truth ; we must by any Means be free, in laying open your Sins, and in carrying home the Conviction of them to your Consciences ; nor dare we gratify any, by holding our Peace in this Matter ; for if we please Men, then are we not the Servants
of

of *Christ*; and if any Soul die in its Sin by our Silence, then we bring the Blood of Souls upon our own Heads, and hazard our own Souls. We are obliged by the Manifestation of the Truth, to commend our selves to Consciences; and if the more we love the less we are loved, then GOD will require it at your Hands. But whether you will hear, or whether you forbear, we must, as we shall answer to the great Shepherd of the Sheep, deal plainly with you. Consider but that one Scripture *Lev. xix. 17.* and ye will see Reproof to be an Act of great Love, and that the Neglect of it in GOD's account is Hatred. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart. Thou shalt in any Ways rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him; or as the last Clause may be rendred, That thou bear not Sin for him.* Now, if you follow these Advices, and if there be a single Eye to GOD, and close Dependence upon him both in Minister and People, mutual Love and Helpfulness, and a joynt Endeavour to promote the great Design of the Ministry, the Glory of GOD in our own Salvation, then our Labour shall not be in vain, but shall be blessed with Increase, and GOD even our GOD shall bless us.

THE

T H E

Great Concern OF SALVATION.

P A R T I.

A Discovery of Man's natural State,
or the guilty Sinner convicted.

ROMANS iii. 23.

*For all have sinned, and come short of the
Glory of GOD.*

WHoever considers his present Condition, will soon see, that his great Business, and chief Concern lies in Three important Enquiries: *What have I done?* Jer. viii. 6. *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts, xvi. 30. *What shall I render to the LORD?* Psal. cxvi. 12. The Answer of the First will make Way for the Second, and that will give Occasion for the Third.

'Tho' wise Men have busied their Heads, and toil'd themselves with wearisom Enquiries, after Happiness; yet none of them could ever give Men a satisfying Answer to any one of these Three Queries. But what they by their Wisdom could not do, that GOD, in his infinite Wisdom and unparallel'd Goodness has done, to the Satisfaction

Satisfaction of all rational Enquirers, in the *Scriptures of Truth.*

If it be enquired, What have we done? Our Text answers, *All Men have sinned, and come short of the Glory of GOD.* If the Question be put, What shall we do to be saved? Look *Acts* xvi. 31. and there we are bid *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we shall be saved.* In fine, if we ask, What we shall render to the LORD for his matchless and unparallel'd Favour to us, we may turn to that *116 Psal.* and *13 Ver.* and there we are told what to do, *I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the LORD.* And much to the same Purpose is that of the Prophet, *Micah* vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD.*

The great Concernment of Gospel Ministers lies in the second Enquiry. 'Tis our principal Business to perswade Men and Women to believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to commend our blessed Maker to poor Sinners. But since we come not to call the *Righteous* but *Sinners* to Repentance, 'tis necessary we lay the Foundation in a Discovery of Man's natural State. Before we offer *Christ*, we shall shew you need him: Before we tender *Mercy*, we shall endeavour to represent your *Misery*: Before you be called to Repentance, we shall shew you are Sinners, who stand in Need of Repentance. And upon this Account we have made Choice of the Words now read, which do offer a fair Occasion for a Discovery of your Sin, and of your Misery on that account.

We

We shall not spend Time in considering the Connection of the Words, which may perhaps afterwards fall more conveniently in our way.

The Text is a general Assertion, in which all stand convicted of, and concluded under Sin: For,

The *Persons* to whom Sin is attributed, are not some single Persons, to a Seclusion of others, but all Mankind. 'Tis not some degenerate Wretches in the *Heathen World*; but *all*, Jew and Gentile, Rich and Poor, High and Low, who have sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD.

'Tis not asserted of them, that they *may* sin, that they are fallible, and if artfully plied by a Temptation, may be taken off their Feet; but that they *all* are already involved in the Guilt of Sin, and have thereby come short of the Glory of GOD. The original Word, which is here rendred *come short*, is emphatical; it properly signifies to fall short of the Mark one aims at, or to fall behind in a Race, whereby the Prize is lost. Man in his first Estate was in a fair way for Glory; Power he had to run the Race, and the Devil had no Power to stop him in it: He had not such Weights as we now are clogged with, and yet he fell short of the Glory of GOD, *i. e.* he lost that Glory in the Enjoyment of GOD, which he had so good a Prospect of; he lost the Image of GOD, which was his Glory, given him of GOD, with all the consequential Advantages of it.

We need not draw any *Doctrine* from the Words; they themselves do express that which we design to insist upon,

That

That all Men and Women, descending from Adam in an ordinary Way, have sinned, and thereby come short of the Glory of GOD.

This *Doctrine* standing so clear in the Words, supersedes any further Proof; and therefore we shall not spend Time in alledging other Scriptures asserting the same Thing.

Before we apply this Truth, we shall,

1. *Premise a few Propositions for clearing the Way to the further Explication of this great and momentuous Truth.*

2. *We shall enquire what Sin formally implies.*

3. *Mention a Property or Two of it.*

4. *Enquire into the Import of this All in the Text.*

5. *Shew what is implied in this Expression, Come short of the Glory of GOD.*

6. *Hence it is that all have sinned and thereby come short of the Glory of GOD.* Now of each of these in Order. And,

First. We shall premise a few Propositions for clearing the Way to what we further design in the Explication of this Truth. The

1. *Proposition* we offer to you is, *That GOD is the absolute and independent Sovereign of the World.* Men do often usurp an absolute Power over their Subjects, and claim a blind and illimited Obedience; but they had need take Heed they do not invade GOD's Right, and that which is his sovereign Prerogative. He is, and he only is absolute Lord and King of the Earth, as the Psalmist sings in *Psal. xlvii.* 2. *The LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the Earth.* And indeed he alone is fit to manage so great

great a Province, forasmuch as there is none among the Gods like unto Him; neither are there any Works like unto his, *Psal. lxxxvi. 8.* His Claim is founded upon the Excellency of his Nature, *Jer. x. 6, 7.* Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD, thou art great, and thy Name is great in might, who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? For to thee doth it appertain, for as much as there is none like unto thee: And upon his Creation of all Things, The LORD is a great King above all Gods, the Sea is his and he made it, *Psal. xcv. 3, 5.* O Jacob and Israel, thou art my Servant, I have formed thee, thou art my Servant, O Israel, *Isa. xlv. 21.* In fine, his Preservation of all Things, and the manifold Benefits he loads his Creatures with, do give him the noblest Title to absolute Dominion; and his glorious Perfections of Wisdom, Power, Holiness and Justice, do not only fit him for it, but make his Sway desirable to all who understand their own Interest.

2. Take this Proposition, GOD the absolute Sovereign of the World has prescribed Laws to all his Creatures, by which he governs them. Not to speak of these Laws which he has given to the inanimate Part of the Creation, he has prescribed Men their Work, he has given them his Laws, whereby they are indispensably obliged to live. There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy, *Jam. i. 12.* The LORD is Judge, King, and Law-giver, *Isa. xxxiii. 22.* We are not in any Thing left altogether arbitrary. He who has said to the Sea, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, has dealt so likewise with Man; he has

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limited

limited him on every Hand by his holy Laws, the incontestable Statutes of Heaven. We are obliged to eat, drink, sleep, converse, and do every Thing by *Rule*; GOD has set us our Bounds as to all these Things, and thither should we come and no further. Indeed these Limits GOD has set us are not such as he sets to the Waves of the tumultuous Sea: No, he deals with us in a Way suited to our Nature; he has set such Limits as none can pass, till they act in direct Contradiction to their very Natures, till they abandon a due Consideration of that wherein their greatest Concern and chiefest Interest lies, as will appear plain enough from that which we offer in the

3d Place, for clearing the Way, *That the great Law-giver of the World has annexed Rewards and Punishments to these Laws he has made.* The Authority of GOD is a tender Point indeed. He has said, he will not give his Glory to another, and therefore he has taken Care to guard the Laws he has made by suitable Rewards and Punishments. GOD indeed is not obliged to give Man any further Reward for his Obedience, than what flows from the Obedience it self, which is sufficient to be a Reward to it self; for *in keeping GOD's Commands there's great Reward.* Pſal. xix. 11. But such is his matchless and unbounded Goodness that he proposed no less Reward of Obedience than eternal Life, a Reward suitable, not to Man's Obedience, which deserves no such Thing, but to the Bounty of the Giver. On the other Hand again he has annexed a dreadful Penalty to his Laws

Laws, break them we may if we will; for GOD has not made it impossible we should; but if we do, then the heavy Curse of God will follow us. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them.* The same Mouth that pronounced the Law, pronounces the Curse, *Gal. iii. 10.* And we know, whom he *curses* they are *cursed*, and whom he *blesseth* they are *blessed* indeed.

4. *These Laws*, which GOD hath given us to walk by, have a *four fold Property* mentioned by the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 12, 14.* *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just, and good.* And Verse 14. *We know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, and sold under Sin.*

(1.) We say it is *holy*; the Law of GOD is the exact Transcript of the holy Will of GOD. There is nothing in it disagreeable to, or unworthy of the holy GOD, who always acts like himself, and is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, or look upon Sin.

(2.) 'Tis *just*. 'Tis the very Measure of all Justice amongst Men, 'tis a Law that gives GOD *his Due* and Man *his*: Nay, Man has no Right or Property in, or Title to any Thing but from this Law. What this makes his, is so, and no more can justly be claimed.

(3.) 'Tis *good*. 'Tis not a Law made to gratify the Lusts of an Earth-worm, 'tis not a Law made without Regard to the Advantage of these who live under it: But GOD in framing his Law, has exactly considered what might be for Man's Good, both in Time and in Eternity; and has in matchless Goodness and Infinite Wis-

dom, ordered the Matter so, That Duty and Interest go ever together, and a Man can never act against his Duty but he wrongs his real Interest, even abstracting from the Consideration of future Rewards or Punishments in another Life.

(4.) The Law is *spiritual*. 'Tis not such a Law as is prescrib'd by Man, which only reaches the outward Man; no, 'tis spiritual, reaching to the Soul and all its inward Actings. It prescribes Bounds to the Spirits of Men, obliging them to inward Obedience and Conformity to it in their Motions, Inclinations and Affections; not a Thought, nay, nor the Circumstance of a Thought, but falls under this spiritual and extensive Law, which made the Psalmist say, *I have seen an End of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad*, Psal. cxix. 96. The Way being thus cleared, we shall now in the

Second Place shew you what Sin is. Sin which is here charged upon all, *properly and formally imports*

1. *A want of Conformity to the Law*, of which we have been discoursing. The Law requires and enjoyns Duty. It obliges us not only to *Actions so and so qualified*, but to have a *right Principle of Action*; it not only enjoyns holy Thoughts, holy Words, and holy Actions, but moreover it requires that the very Frame and Temper of our Hearts be holy; and when we fall short of this, then we sin. That the Law obliges us as to the Frame of our Heart is plain, since it requires that the Tree be good as well as the Fruit, that the Worship and Service we perform

perform to God, be with the whole Strength, Soul and Heart.

2. Sin imports a *Transgression of the Law*, for Sin is a *Transgression of the Law*, 1 John iii. 4. Indeed when Transgression is taken in a large Sense, it comprehends all Sin; but it may be, and is frequently restricted to actual Sins, and Sins of Commission, as the former Branch of the Description is to original Sin, and Sins of Omission. Sin is an Opposition to the Law of GOD. GOD bids *Do, arise, work*: Man transgresses, breaks the Command, and *sits still idle*. GOD forbids such and such sinful Actions, Man does them in Opposition to the Command of GOD, which flows from a Contempt of GOD's Authority; so that we may say,

3. That every Sin implies in its formal Nature *Contempt of GOD*, as that which is its Source. Sin flows from a secret Enmity of Heart against the Almighty, and therefore carries in it a high Contempt of him. It may be Men are so blind that they cannot discern any such Thing in it, but GOD makes breaking the Law, and despising or contemning of the Law, to be all one, Amos ii. 4. *Thus saith the LORD, For three Transgressions of Judah, and for four I will not turn away the Punishment thereof, because they have despised the Law of the LORD, and have not kept his Commandments, and their Lies caused them to err, after the which their Fathers have walked.* Sin in most Mens Eyes is a harmless Thing; but how far otherwise would it be if its Nature were seen in a just Light by the Eye of Faith; if we saw it trampling upon GOD's Authority

ty, Goodness and Holiness, and even endeavouring as it were to ungod him. But that ye may further understand what Sin is, we shall in the

Third Place, mention a twofold inseparable Property or Adjunct of Sin, with which it is ever attended. And

1. Sin is the *Defilement of the Soul*; Sin is a filthy Thing. The Beauty, the Glory of Man, consists in his Conformity to the holy and pure Law of GOD, and in as far as he deviates from that, in so far is he defiled and polluted. Every Sin has a Stain in it, and robs the Soul of its Beauty, occasions a Sort of Loathsomeness, whereby in the Eyes of GOD, and even of it self, it becomes ugly and abominable; 'tis the abominable Thing which GOD hates, *Oh do not that abominable Thing that I hate*, saith the Lord, Jer. xlv. 4. The natural State of Man is upon the account of this Filthiness, compared to a wretched Infant that's cast out in all its natural Pollutions, Ezek. xvi. and to every Thing else that's filthy, to Puddle, Mire and Dirt, and to a menstruous Cloth; but yet all of them are not sufficient to give a just Idea of its Filthiness.

2. Sin, as 'tis attended with *Filth*, so 'tis attended with *Guilt*, it makes the Sinner guilty, it obliges him to undergo the *Penalty* which GOD hath annexed to his Law; it carries ever along with it a *Title to the Curse of GOD*. When the Law of GOD is considered as that which represents his *Holiness* and *spotless Purity*, whereby it becomes the *Measure and Standard* of all Beauty

ty, Glory and Purity to us ; then Sin, as it stands opposed to it in this Respect, is lookt upon as a *Stain*, a *Blot*, a *Defilement* : But as the Law of GOD carries on it the Impression of his royal Authority, the Breach of it binds over to just Punishment for the Reparation of the Honour of that contemned Authority.

Thus we see what it is that all Men are charged with. GOD here lays home to them a Breach of the Law, represents them as *condemned* and *guilty*, *deformed* and *defiled Creatures*. *All Men have sinned*, every one has broken the holy, just, good, and spiritual Law of the great Sovereign of the World ; all are *guilty* of a Contempt of his Authority, all are *defiled* with that abominable Thing which his Soul hates. Lest any one should take Occasion to clear himself and say, O I am not the Person spoken of, I never contemned GOD, I never defiled my self, and so I am not guilty of that which is charged upon Mankind. Lest any should say, I am clean, GOD has put a Bar upon this Door, by extending the Charge to *all* without Exception. And so I come in the

Fourth Place, to enquire into the *Import* of this universal *Particle* ALL in my Text ; and it imports

I. That Persons of *all Ages* are involved in the same common Misery. Young and old have sinned. The Suckling upon the Breast, as well as the old Man that's stooping into the Grave. None needs envy another. The old Man needs not envy the Innocency of the Infant of Days, for the youngest carries as much Sin into the

World, as renders it ugly, deformed and guilty. Indeed there are who have not sinned at the Rate that others have done. Children have not sinned *after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression*, Rom. v. 14. their Age would not allow them ; but Sin enough they have *derived to them from Adam to damn, to defile them.*

2. Persons of all Professions, Jew and Gentile, whatever their religious Profession be. This Evil is not confined to those of one Religion, but is extended to all : The Apostle sums up all Mankind, as to Religion, under Two Heads, Jew and Gentile ; and, at large, in the foregoing Part of this *Epistle*, proves them both to be Sinners.

3. All Ranks of Persons, High and Low, Rich and Poor. This is not an Evil of which the Prince can free himself more than the Peasant. These who may be shining in glistering Apparel are upon this Account vile and filthy as the Toad they cannot endure to look upon : These who may condemn or absolve others, may themselves be under a Sentence of Condemnation ; nay, it really is so with all who are not *saved from their Sins.* Even these very Men who have sometimes forgot themselves so far as to advance themselves above the Laws, are yet not only subject to GOD's Law, but lying under an Obligation to Punishment on account of their Breaches of this holy, just and good Law.

4. Persons in all Generations are guilty. It was not only some poor Wretches in the old World which GOD swept off the Face of the Earth by a Flood, that have sinned, but Persons of all
Ages

Ages, Ranks and Qualities in all Generations. There is not one *Exception* among all the natural Descendants of *Adam*, *Man* nor *Woman*, *Great* nor *small*, *Rich* nor *Poor*, *King* nor *Beggar*; all have sinned from the greatest to the least. None can justly upbraid another with what he has done in this Matter, since all are in the Provocation: *All have sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD.*

And this leads us to that which we did in the next Place propose to discourse of to you, viz.

Fifthly. The Import of this *coming short of the Glory of GOD*; and this takes in or implies,

1. That Man has fallen short of *that Glory which he had by the Conformity of his Nature to GOD.* Man is said, 1 Cor xi. 7. to be *the Image and Glory of GOD*; and indeed so was he in his first and best Estate. O what of GOD was there in innocent *Adam*? A Mind full of Light; how wonderfully did it represent that GOD who is Light, and in whom there is no Darkness at all? A pure Soul, the exact Transcript of the divine Purity? The rest of the Creatures had in them some darker Representations of the Glory of GOD's Wisdom and Power, but only Man of all the Creatures in the lower World was capable to represent the Holiness, Righteousness and Purity, and other rational Perfections of the ever blessed Deity; and upon this account Man was *the Glory of GOD.* GOD as it were gloried in him as the Master-piece of the visible Creation, in whom alone more of GOD was to be seen than

than in all the rest beside. This Man has now lost ; he has fallen short of the *Beauty and Glory* which made him the *Glory of GOD*.

2. Man has lost the *Glory* he had as he was the *Deputy of the great GOD in this lower World*. He was made Lord of *GOD's Hand-works* upon Earth ; and all the *Creatures* in it paid their *Homage* to him, when they came and received their *Names* from him in *Paradise*: But now the *Crown is fallen from his Head*, he has come short of this *Glory* ; the *Creatures* refuse *Subjection* to him.

3. Man is come short of the *Glory* he had in the *Enjoyment of GOD in Paradise*. It was *Man's Glory, Honour and Happiness* to be allowed a more than ordinary *Familiarity* with *GOD*. *GOD* and *Adam* conversed together in *Paradise*. He was allowed the *Company of GOD* ; that made his *State* happy indeed. What could *Man* want while the *All-sufficient GOD* kept up so close, so blessed and comfortable a *Familiarity* with him, and daily loaded him with his *Favours* ? But this he has come short of.

4. *Man* has come short of that *Glory* he had the *Prospect of*. *GOD* set him fairly on the *Way*, and did furnish him sufficiently for a *Journey* to eternal, unchangeable, never-fading *Glory* ; but this he has come short of ; and this indeed follows natively upon the former. This is indeed much, but we conceive this is not all that the *Expression* has in it ; nay, certainly there is more in it : This falling short tho' it only seems to point at the *Negative*, yet certainly it takes

takes in the Positive and we therefore say, that this Expression in the

5 Place, implies not only Man's *Loss of his original Beauty and Glory* in a Conformity to the Image of GOD, but that he *has fallen in the Mire, and is defiled by Sin*. He who some time a Day was the Image and Glory of GOD is now more filthy than the Ground he treads on, than the Mire of the Street, than the lothsom Toad.

6. Not only has he lost the *Dominion he had*, but *he is become a Slave*, a Slave to Sin. He who some time a Day look'd like a God in the World, is now debased down to Hell. He to whom the Creatures once vail'd as to their Sovereign, now daily stands in Danger of his Life by them, and lies open to the Insults of the meanest of them.

7. Not only has he lost the sweet and Soul-ravishing Communion he had with GOD, but now he is (as it were) *scarce capable to look toward him*; the Sight of GOD which once was his Life is now to him as Death.

8. Not only has Man forfeited his Title to *future Happiness*, but which is worse, he is by Sin entitled to *future, eternal, inconceivable Misery and Wo*. A dreadful coming short this is indeed. From how high a Hope into what an inconceivable Abyfs of Misery and Wo, is poor Man fallen by Sin! *The Crown is fallen from his Head*. He was a little hence all Beauty, Glory Excellency and Comeliness: But now, alas, we may grone out an *Ichabod* over him! where is the Glory? We come now in the

Sixth Place, to enquire into the Source and Spring of all this Misery and Wo. How and whence is it that all are involved in the Guilt of Sin; and this sad and afflicting Calamity flows.

1. FROM *the Guilt of Adam's first Sin.* Adam by the holy, wise, just and good Appointment of GOD stood in the Room of all his Posterity. Had he stood, in him we all had stood, and retained the Innocency and Integrity of our Natures, the Favour, Love and Kindness of Heaven; but he *falling into Sin*, in him we all *sinned*; and by the Disobedience of this one Man, we all were made Sinners, as the Apostle doth at large discourse, *Rom. v.* from the 12 Ver. and downwards. This, this is the poisoned Spring whence all our Sin, all our Sorrow and Misery flows

2. THIS flows from the *natural Depravity of the Mind of Man* that's transmitted to us from our Progenitors. *We are shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did our Mothers conceive us.* We received a fatal Wramp when first formed in the Womb, as the Psalmist complains, *Psal. li. 5.* And indeed there is none can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean. Our infected Parents transfer to us the *Infection of Sin*. Sin runs in a Blood, and our Natures have a natural Inclination to *Evil, only to Evil, and that continually.* *Gen. vi. 5.*

3. THIS flows from *abounding Temptations.* As our Hearts are wicked, and set only on *Evil*; so every Thing in this present Disorder on account of Sin, is suited to carry on the Infection. The Creatures, by reason of Sin, are made *subject to Vanity.* They are made subservient to the Lusts

Lusts of Men; the Devil and our corrupt Hearts daily abuse them to this End; and by these Means it is that all Men have *sinned*, and thereby *come short of the Glory of GOD*.

THE *Application* is that which we *principally* designed in the Choice of this Subject: And therefore we have but named Things in the doctrinal Part: *And now we come to improve the Whole.*

THAT which we design chiefly in the Improvement of this, is an *Use of Conviction*. Some Days ago we came to you proclaiming the Grace, Mercy and Love of GOD in *Christ Jesus*; now we come to accuse you as guilty of Sin. The Design of our doing so, is indeed the Advancement of the Glory of *Christ*, and in him of the Grace and Mercy of the *Lord God*. But our present Work in it self is such as doth not in its own Nature look that Way, tho' by the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of GOD it be made subservient thereunto.

YOU are all here present before the Lord, to hear what GOD the Lord will speak unto you; and as *Ehud* said to *Eglon* King of *Moab*, so we say to you, *We have a Message from GOD to you*, *Judg. iii. 20*. A sad Message, not much unlike to that which *Ehud* brought to *Eglon*, a Message of Death. We come this Day to you to implead you in GOD's Name as guilty of Sin. The Message is not to some particular gross Offenders, but to every Soul now present before the LORD; to the Child, to the young Man and Maid, to those of riper Years, and to them
who

who are old, and stoop under the Weight of many Years.

IN the Name, and at the Instance of the great, the terrible GOD, the King, the Lord of Hosts, whose Name is dreadful among the Heathen, *Mal. i. 14. that confirmeth the Word of his servants, and performeth the Counsel of his Messengers, Is. xlv. 26.* we are to implead, impeach, and accuse every Soul here present as guilty of Sin. Hitherto we have spoken in general, which, it may be, has been no better to you than *Nathan's Parable to David*. It may be some of you have been saying, that the Soul that has sinned has deservedly fallen short of the Glory of GOD, and fallen under the Wrath of GOD: But now what we said before in general, we come to say in particular to every one of you, as *Nathan did to David, Thou art the Man, thou art the Woman, thou art the Child, the young Man, or the Maid who hast sinned, and thereby come short of the Glory of GOD.*

Now that we may be successful in this Work, and bring you, if possible, to understand your State and Condition, we shall

1. Read and open, as it were, the Charge and Indictment we do in GOD's Name bring against you.

2. Lead Witnesses, whereby we shall prove it against you all in general.

3. Endeavour particularly by Arguments to make our Charge good. (1) Against Children and young Men. (2.) Against these of a middle Age. And (3.) against old Men and old Women. This we shall do, as it were, by taking you to the Places, the

Companies and Occasions where you have sinned, and incurred the Guilt now charged on you.

4. *Shew what Satisfaction our great LORD demands against such Traitors.*

5. *What Reason he has to require it. And then,*

6. *Endeavour to represent to you, your Misery upon this Account.*

I. The Charge we lay against you, is not some petty, some small Misdemeanour, that may be atton'd for by a bare Acknowledgment, by some pitiful Mock, *God have Mercy upon me.* No; the Charge draws deep, 'tis no less Crime than that of Sin, Sin against the great Sovereign of the World. Ye all have sinned. O if ye knew what a World of Evil is in that cursed Thing Sin? When we say, ye have sinned, you are ready to say, O we know that well enough, is this all ye have to say? When we heard of such a dreadful Thing as a Charge and Indictment in the Name of GOD against us, when we heard of leading Witnesses, and all the other Parts of a Trial, we did apprehend there was some terrible Thing a coming, some dreadful unheard of Evil to be laid home to our Door; but now we find there is nothing said against us but only that we are Sinners, and who will deny this? Who knows it not? and this is but the common Lot. *God be merciful to us,* we are all Sinners, and there the Repentance of most is done; their Sores are healed, and they can live, and it may be die, without any Fear in this Case: such light Apprehensions have most Part of Sin.

These, these it may be, are the Apprehensions of not a few of you, upon hearing the Charge: But if there be not blind Minds, shut Eyes, deaf Ears and
dread-

dreadfully hard Hearts amongst us ; ere all be done, some of you will, it may be, change your Minds, and think this a very *dreadful and heavy Charge*. If GOD would now concur by his Spirit, and enable us to manage our Work to purpose, if he would let out of the convincing Influences of his Spirit, the Weight of this Charge would press you so, as to make your *Hearts fail and sink within you*.

Sin is an ordinary Word, a little Word, and most Men do apprehend that there is but little in it ; but mistake it not, there is *much* in it, *more* than Angels or Men can ever *discover*, or *fully unfold* ; yet that all this that we have said may not seem a groundless Allegation, I shall,

1. Set up to you *some Glasses*, wherein you may get a View of *Sin's ugly Face* ; or I shall, as *Balaam* did *Balaam*, take you to such Places, where you may get a Sight of its *formidable Nature, Power and Malignity*.
2. I shall tell you of *some dreadful and monstrous Evils* that are lodg'd in every Sin, the least idle Thought or Word.
- And, 3. I shall mention *some killing Aggravations* that your Sins are clothed with, that put an *Accent* upon them, and *inhance their Guilt*. And this will let you see the great Evil of Sin ; this will open your Indictment.

First. We shall give you *some Prospects of Sin*. It may be many of you do think but very little of Sin, but here I desire you to come and look at it.

1. In the *Glass of GOD's Law*. See the holy, the high and exalted G O D, exhibiting his Mind and Will in Two Tables, Tables contain-
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ning safe, good, holy, just, spiritual, and every Way advantageous Rules, for that Creature, whom GOD has taken so distinguishing and particular a Care of. Well, what shall we see of Sin here? Here, O *here*, you may see Sin breaking, nay, dashing to Pieces these Two Tables, in a worse Sense than Moses did, *Exod. xxxii. 19.* Every Sin, the *least Sin*, throws them both to the Ground, for as the *Apostle James* tells us, *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all,* James ii. 10. Is it a small Thing to you to trample upon, to tread under Foot, the *holy, the righteous Law of GOD*, that is the perfect Image and Representation of all his Holiness and spotless Purity? but if yet ye will not see the cursed Nature of Sin, then we bid you in the

2d Place, Take a View of it in the *Nature of the great GOD*, the Seat of all Majesty, Glory, Beauty and Excellency; and if you look at it here, O how *ugly* will it appear! Nothing in all the World contrary and opposite to the Nature of GOD, but Sin. The meanest, the most apparently deformed Creature in the World, the Toad, the crawling Insect, carries in its Nature nothing *really opposite* to the Nature of God: Sin, only Sin stands in Opposition to him. This he cannot dwell with. *Evil shall not dwell with him, nor Sinners stand in his Sight.* Such is that Abhorrence that GOD has at Sin, that when he speaks of it, his Heart as it were rises against it, *Oh do not that abominable Thing, which I hate;* in that forecited Jer. xlv. 4. And if yet ye will not

see its *Sinfulness*, I will take you where you may see some more of it. Go take a View of it

3. In the *Threatnings of the Law*, and see there what Estimate G O D puts on it, and what a Thing it is. All the Power of Heaven, the Anger, the Fury, the Vengeance of G O D, all are levelled at the Head of Sin. Take but one Instance for all, in that vii- *Joshua*; there a People accustomed to Victory, turn their Back before the Enemy, fall a Prey to a People devoted to Destruction; nay, moreover, GOD in the 12 ver. calls all the People *accursed*, and tells, they cannot stand before the Enemy, *neither will I be with you any more*, says he. Why, what's the Matter? wherefore is the Heat of all this Anger? what meaneth this *Vengeance*? The Matter was, there was a *Sin committed*, *Acchan* had taken some of the Spoil of the Enemy. Thus you see, one Sin makes God breathe out Threatnings against a whole Nation. In fine, look through the Book of GOD, and there you shall see one *Threatning* big with *temporal*, another with *eternal Plagues*; one full of *external*, another of *internal and spiritual Woes*; and all as it were levelled at the Head of Sin. And is that a small Matter which never fails to set all the *Vengeance of Heaven* against the Person that's guilty of it? But yet this is not all, you may see more, if ye look at it

4. In the *Judgments of GOD that are abroad in the Earth*. Look we to one Nation, there we shall see Thousands falling before the avenging Enemy, the *Sword glutted as it were with Blood*; Men who a little before were possess'd of Wisdom, Cou-

Courage, and all these Indowments which serve to enhance the Worth of the Sons of Men, are here laid *Heaps upon Heaps*: Go we to another, there we shall see no fewer carried off by *Sickness* and *Diseases*, and all wearing out by Time. Go to Church-yards, and see what vast Havock these do make; there you may see the Rubbish of many Generations laid *Heaps upon Heaps*. Well, see you nothing of Sin in all this? What think you of all these lamentable Evils, Miseries and Woes? Why, see you nothing of Sin in them all? Sure you are blind if you do not. I ask you as *Jehu* did, when he saw the dead Sons of *Achab*, 2 Kings x. 9. *Who slew all these?* Who brought all these Sons of Pride, who not long ago were strangely ruffling it out in the Light of warlike Glory, down to the *Sides of the Pit*? who filled your Church-yards with *Heaps upon Heaps*, Fathers and Sons, High and Low, Rich and Poor, of all Sexes, Ranks, Ages and Degrees? Surely *Sin has done this*; for as by *one Man Sin* entred into the World, and Death by Sin: And so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12. But if still you will look upon Sin as a small and light Thing, we have yet another Glass wherein you may have a further Sight of it.

5. Enter the House of a Soul under Trouble of Conscience; look at a *Heman*, and you shall hear him making an heavy Mone in that lxxxviii. Psalm: There you see a Man that has a Soul full of Trouble, oppressed with all the Waves and Billows of the Wrath of God, almost distracted with the Terrors of God. Now, if you saw

one in this Case crying out in Anguish of Spirit ; nay, it may be, *tearing himself, beating his Breast*; ask him the Reason of all this Distress, he will tell you, *That 'tis Sin that's done all this*. He has no Rest in his Bones for Ills that he has done, *Psal. xxxviii. 3*. And if yet ye have not seen enough of the Sinfulness and Evil of Sin, I shall give you another Prospect of it.

6. In the *hateful, monstrous and enormous Crimes that are committed in the World*. Some Sins there are which bring along with them Infamy and Disgrace, even before Men. Human Nature, as corrupt as it is, *shrinks* at some Sins, they carry in them such an evident Contrariety to the faint Remains of natural Light. Sins there are, which, as the Apostle says *1 Cor. v. 1. are not so much as named among the Gentiles*. Now if a Man be guilty of any of these crying *Abominations*, these crimson Sins, then he becomes odious in the World. Call a Man a Murderer, an incestuous Person, an Abuser of his Parents, or the like, every sober Person will flee from, and evite as a Pest the Company of such an one : But why? what's the Matter? what is there so odious in these Crimes, that every one flees from the Person guilty of them? there is *Sin in them*; and hence it is, they are so *hateful* : And the only Thing that distinguisheth these from others, is, That they have *different circumstantial Aggravations* : For in the Nature of Sin they all do agree, the *least* and the *greatest*; the *least Sin* strikes at the holy Law of GOD, contemns the Authority of the great and supreme Lawgiver, as well as the *greatest* doth. And if Sin be so *odious* when

when you get a fuller View of it, as it were in these large, these great and *crying Provocations*, 'tis no less so, when 'tis less perceptible in these Sins which quadrate better with our vitiated and corrupted Natures; for indeed the Difference among Sins, as to *greater* and *less*, lies not so much in the Nature of the Sins, as in their different Respect to our Understanding, arising from the Objects about which they are conversant. But if after all these Views of Sin, your Eyes are so blinded that you cannot see it, then come take a View of it

7. In the *Case of the Damned*. Here, here you may have a strange, an Heart-affecting View of Sin's ugly Face. See the poor Wretches lying in Bundles, boiling eternally in that Stream of Brimstone, roring under the *intolerable*, and yet *eternal Anguish* of their *Spirits*. Take a Survey of them in this lamentable Posture. If you should see some hundreds of Men, Women and Children, all thrown alive into burning Pitch or melted Lead, would not this present you with a *sad Scene of Misery* and Wo? would not this be a dismal Sight? indeed it would be so: But all this is nothing to the unspeakable Misery of the Devils and Damned, who have fallen into the *Hands of the living and Sin-revenging GOD*, and are laid in Chains of massy and thick Darkness, eternally depressed and sunk into the bottomless Depth of the Wrath of GOD, and chok'd with the Steam of that Lake of Fire and Brimstone; and have every *Faculty of their Soul*, every *Joint of their Body*, brim-full of the *Fury of the eternal GOD*: Be-

hold, and wonder at this terrible and astonish-
ing Sight; and in this take a View of Sin. We
Hell now opened, and saw you the Damned in
Chains of Darknes, and if you heard their
dreadful Yelling, and found the Stream of the
bottomless Pit, ye would then in every Sense get
some Discovery of Sin. 'Tis only Sin that has
*kindled that dreadful and inextinguishable Fire of
Wrath*, and cast the Damned into it; and 'tis
Sin that *holds* them there, and *torments* them
there. If you had but a just Impression of these
Things, how hateful would Sin be to you?
And if after all that has been said, you still i-
magine that Sin is not so bad as we would repre-
sent it, then come once more, and take a View
of it

8. In the *Sufferings of Christ*. Here is a Glass,
O Criminals, wherein you may see your own
Face. You think it a little Thing that you have
sinned; nay, it may be, you roll Sin *as a sweet
Morsel under your Tongues*. But come here, and
see what a Thing it is which you thus dread-
fully mistake! Come see it *holding the Sword*;
O strange! Nay more, *thrusting it into Christ's
Side*! Here, Sinners, is a Sight that made the
Earth to tremble, and the Sun to hide his
Face, as we see *Matth. xxvii. 51. Luke xxiii. 45*.
In this Glass you may see, (1.) *What GOD's
Thoughts of Sin are*. So highly opposite to his
Nature is it, that the Bowels of Affection he
had to the Son of his Love, whom he so high-
ly honoured, when the Voice came from the
excellent Glory, saying, *This is my beloved Son in
whom I am well pleased*, were not able to hold up
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the Hand of inexorable Justice from *striking at him, nay, striking him dead* for the Sin of the elect World. Would not that be a great Proof, think ye, of the Aversion of a Parent to any Thing, if he would rather choose to slay his Son, nay, his only Son, his Son whom he loved most tenderly, than it should escape a Mark of his Displeasure? (2.) Here you may see more of the *Pollution of Sin than any where else*. Never was there any Thing that gave so just Apprehensions of the Stain of Sin, as the Death of Christ. An *ingrain'd Pollution* it must indeed be, if no less will *wash it out* than the *Blood of GOD*. (3.) Here is a dreadful Evidence of the *Potwer of Sin*. Never did this more appear, than when it blinded the Eyes of the degenerate Sons of Men so far, that they could not discern *the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, who was so full of Grace and of Truth*, whose divine Nature daily beam'd, as it were, through that of his humane, in miraculous Operations, Works, and Words, which none but GOD could do, none but GOD could speak. And no less was the Power of Sin seen, when it hurried Men headlong into that Heaven-daring Pitch of Impiety, to *imbrue their Hands in the Blood of GOD*. O Sinners, would you see what Sin is? look at it with its Hands reeking in the Gore and Blood of GOD, and tell what you think of it.

But 'tis like, some of you may say, What is this to the Purpose? This is not the Sin that we are guilty of. We have never imbrued our Hands in the Blood of GOD, and so herein we cannot see our Crimes. This makes nothing to

that which now you are doing, the unfolding the hainous Nature of that Crime you now implead us as guilty of before GOD. To this we answer,

(1.) Should we grant what's alledged as to your Innocency in this Matter, to be true, yet herein there is *much of the Nature of your Sin* to be seen, since it partakes of the common Nature of Sin with that of the *Murder of GOD*; and since it is every way *equal to*, if not that *very same*, against which GOD did evidence his Hatred in so wonderful a Manner, in the Death of his only begotten Son, whom *he spared not, but gave to the Death, when he laid on him the Iniquity of the elect World.* But

(2.) We say that *very Sin* lies at your Door, O Sinners; and if you deny it, I would only ask you one Question, Dare you hold up your Faces, and in the Sight of GOD say, That you did receive *Jesus Christ* the first Time ever there was an Offer of him made to you? If not, then you are guilty in that you *practically determine* the putting him to Death *no Crime.* You by your Practice bear Witness to, or assert the Justice of the *Jews Quarrel*, and bring the Blood of GOD upon your Head: And therefore in *their Crimes* you may see *your own.* All the World, to whom the Gospel Report comes, must either be *for* or *against* the *Jews* in their Prosecution of him; and no otherwise can we give Testimony against them, but by believing the Gospel Report of him, that he was indeed the Son of GOD, the Saviour of the World. In so far as we refuse a *Comp'iance with this*, in as far
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are we guilty of the Death of Christ: For Unbelief subscribes the Jews Charge against the Son of GOD, and asserts him an Impostor.

(3.) Either you are *Believers* or *Unbelievers*; if Believers, then it was your very Sins which killed Christ, it was for your Iniquities he was bruised. *But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed.* All we like lost Sheep have gone astray: *We have turned every one to his own Way, and the LORD hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all,* saith the Prophet in the Name of all the Elect, *Isa. liii. 5, 6.* If you be Unbelievers, then you do not believe the Witness that Christ gave of himself, that he is the Son of GOD; and therefore do *practically* declare him an Impostor, and worthy of Death, and so may say of your selves, with respect to the Jews Cruelty, That when they condemned him, they had your Consent to what they did.

Now, what think ye, O Criminals, when we have in these Eight different Glasses given you a Prospect of the Crime we implead you of? Is it not a *fearful one*? If you be not strangely stupid, sure you must own it so: But lest there should be any so blind, as not to discern what it is we accuse them of, we shall

Secondly. Proceed to mention some great Evils that are all imply'd in the *least Sin*, in every Provocation. This Charge which we intent against you is no mean Thing. For,

1. It has *Atheism* in it. An *Atheist* who denies the Being of a GOD, is a *Monster* in Nature

ture; a Creature so extremely degenerate, that some have doubted, whether there ever was, or could be, any of the Sons of *Adam* so debauch'd as in *Principle* to avouch this monstrous Untruth. But there are practical Atheists, such as the Apostle mentions and characteriseth, *Tit. i. 16. who profess to know GOD, but in Works deny him, being abominable and disobedient*; or, as it is in the first Language, *Children of unperswasion, or imperswadible, and to every good Work reprobate*: That there are such none can deny, since every Sinner is in some sort such, for every Sin has *Atheism* in it. In the 14 and 53 *Psalms* we have a Description of the natural State of Man; and look to the Spring of all the Impieties, in the 1 Verse, *The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God*; and then a Train of lamentable practical Impieties follow; *they are corrupt, they have done abominable Works, there is none that doth Good*. The *Psalmist* doth not there discourse of some profligate Wretches among the *Jews*, or of the *Gentiles* who knew not GOD, but of the whole Race of *Adam*, *Jew* and *Gentile*, as the Apostle proves in the 10, 11 and 12 Verses of this Chapter wherein our Text lies, when he adduces Testimonies from this *Psalms* to prove all and every one to have sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD. And indeed the Thing proves it self. What? don't we deny his Sovereignty when we violate his Laws? Do not we deny and disgrace his Holiness, when we cast our Filth before his Face? And we disparage his Wisdom when we set up our own Will, as the Rule and Guide of our Actions. We deny his

Sufficiency

Sufficiency when we profess that we find more in Sin, or in the Creature than in him. In fine, *Every Sin is a Denial of all God's Attributes* one way or other; and therefore every Sin has *Atheism* in it: So that our Charge against you runs very high, it amounts to no less than an Impeachment for *Atheism*. A Crime, than which there is not, nor indeed can there be any more odious: For all other Distempers naturally fall in here; they all issue themselves into this Infection: And hence is it that the Atheist is generally so odious and hateful, and yet even they who *hate the Atheist* most, *want not Atheism*, and they who will be most forward to question this Truth, *That all Sinners are guilty of Atheism*, are, 'tis like, most guilty. This then is one Branch of the Charge laid against you; but 'tis not all. For,

2. We charge you all with *Idolatry*. Sinners you are, and every Sin has Idolatry in it. How can this be? will you say, we never worshipped an Idol all our Life, we never bowed at the Name of a strange God; we bless GOD we were better taught than so, we were not bred *Papists* nor Pagans, but reformed Christians, who renounce all Idols, and plead for the Worship of one GOD alone. Well, notwithstanding of all this, *Idolaters* you are. What, do you think that only the more gross *Acts of Idolatry* are reputed *such* by the holy GOD? This certainly flows from your Ignorance of *him*, and of his *Law*. Did you understand *either*, you would never attempt your own Justification. There is not only outward and gross Idolatry, but there

there is a more secret and inward Sort of it. A. Set of Men there were with whom the Prophet *Ezekiel* had to do, who were as formal and punctual in their Attendance upon Duties, I mean the external Duties of Religion, as you are: Externally in Covenant with GOD they were as are you; nor is it improbable that they had now abandon'd all external Idolatry; for the *Jews* after the *Babylonish* Captivity, in the Time of which *Ezekiel* lived, never more followed Idols as before. And yet hear the Message these Men have sent to them by the Prophet in that xiv Chap. of his Prophecies, *Son of Man*, says GOD to him, *These Men have set up their Idols in their Heart, and put the Stumbling-block of their Iniquity before their Face*: And so he proceeds in the Sequel of the Chapter from the 3 Verse and downwards, to threaten them with grievous and terrible Punishments. Every one that sets up any Thing in that Room in his Heart which is GOD's Due, is an Idolater; for Idolatry is the transferring that Love, Esteem, Confidence, Trust, Fear, Reverence or Obedience which is due to GOD, on any Creature. Now, who is not guilty of this, when he serves Sin? doth he not obey either his own Will, or the Devil in Opposition to the Command of GOD, and thereby substitute either himself or Satan into GOD's Room? Think, O think upon this Part of your Charge, and tremble. But to proceed,

3. Every Sin has *Blasphemy* in it, it reproaches GOD. They are not the only Blasphemers, who in reproachful Speeches belch out against Heaven

Heaven, and as the *Psalmist* expresses it, *Psal. lxxiii. 10. Set their Mouth against the Heaven, and with their Tongue walk through the Earth,* sparing neither GOD nor Man; but these also are Blasphemers, who do in their Actions reproach GOD, *Numb. xv. 30, 31. The Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that Soul shall be cut off from among his People, because he hath despised the Word of the LORD, and hath broken his Commandment; that Soul shall be utterly cut off: His Iniquity shall be upon him.* Is it a small Thing to you, O Sinners, that you have broken the Command of GOD? It may be light and easy in your Eyes, but see to it, whether GOD's Word or yours shall stand. You call it a light Thing; but GOD looks upon himself as reproach'd by it; and indeed he justly looks upon it as a Reproach; for every Sin charges him, (1.) with *Folly*. GOD in giving Laws to Men to walk by, designed the Manifestation of his Wisdom in making such Laws as became the infinite Wisdom of the supreme Governor of the World: But the Sinner by every Sin says practically, that GOD's Laws are not wise; his own Will which he follows in the Commission of Sin he thinks better. (2.) It reproaches his *Goodness*. The Sinner says by his Practice, That neither GOD's Laws nor himself are good, but that GOD has either through *Ignorance*, or *Folly*, or *Malice*, retrench'd him of what might have conduced to his Good; that his Laws are not calculate to the Advantage and real Good of his Subjects. (3.) He hereby likewise reproaches the

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the *Righteousness and Holiness of God*, in as far as these are stamp'd upon the Law which he not only *rejects* but *tramples upon*, as one that *believes not God*, calls him a *Liar*, 1 John v. 10. So he that obeys him not, accuses him either of *Unrighteousness* or *Folly*. Now this Branch of the Charge rises higher than *avow'd Atheism*; for the Atheist intirely disowns God, and so entertains not such unsuitable Thoughts of him as he doth who owns him, and yet accuses him by his Practice, of Ignorance, Folly and Impurity. But this is not all that's in the Crime laid against you: For

4. Every Sin has *Robbery* in it. 'Tis a Rape committed, an Endeavour to carry away some one or other of the *Crown Jewels of Heaven*. God has said *he will not give his Glory to another*; and one darling Part of this Glory is that of his *absolute Dominion*. Now every Sinner endeavours to rob God of this, and that to *clothe* either *Satan* or *Sin* with it. The commanding Power it would have taken from God, and given to it self, or some other, than which there can be no *greater Robbery*. Again, the Glory of God's Sovereignty is due to him in a punctual Obedience to every one of his Commands. He that obeys the Command, gives God the Glory of his *Authority*, and owns him Governor of the World, and this is a Part of God's Property; 'tis the Revenue that he requires of the World, and the Sinner by every Sin he commits, attempts to rob him of this Glory, invades his Property. We find God himself managing the Charge of Robbery against a People called by his Name,
Mal.

Mal. iii. 8, 9. Will a Man rob God? yet ye have robbed me: But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In Tithes and Offerings. Ye are cursed with a Curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation. So I say to you, You have robbed God: But you will say, wherein have we robbed him? I answer, In that which is far more valuable than Tithes and Offerings; you have robbed him, and in every Sin do rob him, of that Obedience which to him is better than Sacrifice. Hath the Lord as great Delight in Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hear-ken than the Fat of Rams, 1 Sam. xv. 22. But this yet is not all; we charge you

5. With Rebellion. Every Sinner is a Rebel against God, he casts off the Yoke of God, bursts the Bonds of Obedience, and takes up rebellious Arms against God the great Sovereign of the World. Rebellion is a Name so odious, that the unjust Imputation of it has been made frequently like the wild Beasts Skins with which some primitive Persecutors clothed the Saints of the most High, that thereby they might set upon them the Dogs to tear them. Men have been termed Rebels, and had this Note of Infamy put upon them, for disobeying the unlawful and impious Commands of Men; while Disobedience to the Commands of God has got a more mild and favourable Name; while Duty has been called Rebellion, the highest Acts of Rebellion against the most High God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth, such as Drunkenness, Swearing, Per-

Persecution, have been horribly miscalled by the Appropriation of soft Names ; the Drunkard has been called a *Good-fellow*, the Swearer a *Gentleman*, and the Persecutor a *Loyalist*. But God will take Care to have these Abuses rectified, and to have Things call'd by their *right Names*, and then Sin, and only Sin will be found to be *Rebellion* ; and this we charge upon you. And that we have Ground to assert every Sin Rebellion, you may soon see, if you consider that, *1 Sam. xii. 14, 15. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his Voice, and not rebel against the Commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the King that reigneth over you, continue following the LORD your God. But if ye will not obey the Voice of the LORD, but rebel against the Commandment of the LORD, then shall the Hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your Fathers.* Thus you see, obeying and not rebelling, disobeying and rebelling, are plainly the same Thing in God's account : God uses them so ; if ye obey and rebel not, if you disobey and rebel. This then is one Branch of the Charge we now manage against you. In God's Name we accuse you of *Rebellion*, when we accuse you of *Sin* ; for as you have just now heard, *Rebellion or Sin* is in Scripture account, and therefore in God's account, one and the same, and how hainous this Crime is, we find the Spirit of God telling us in that *1 Sam. xv. 23. Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft.* Once more,

6. We charge *Murder* upon you. An hard Charge, will you say, if it be well proven. A Charge, which if it be made good against us,

we deserve by the Law of GOD and Man to die. Well, as difficult as you may think it, we shall make it good against every Soul of you, and that after this Manner. You have sinned, and every *Sinner is a Murderer*; and that the worst of Murderers. Well might the wise Man say, *Eccles. ix. 18. One Sinner destroyeth much Good*: For (1.) he murders his own Soul by it. What is said of Adultery is indeed applicable to every Sin, *Prov. xvi. 32. He that doth it destroyeth his own Soul*, and so is guilty of that worst of Wickedness Self-murder. He slays a Soul and not a Body only, who commits Sin. (2.) He is in his Disposition a Murderer of God, who commits Sin; this is plain if you consider Two Scriptures, 1 *John iii. 5.* 'tis asserted that Hatred is Murder, *Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murderer*; and ye know that no Murderer hath eternal Life. And *Rom. viii. 7.* 'tis said, *The carnal Mind is Enmity against GOD*. So that the natural Man in the State wherein he is born is a Hater, an Enemy of GOD; and therefore in GOD's account a Murderer of GOD; for indeed he that hates one, forbears murdering only for Want either of *Opportunity*, or *Power*, or *Secrecy*, or some such like *Advantage*. Now, every Sin is the Product of that natural Enmity, the Fruit which grows on the carnal Mind; and therefore must partake of the Nature of the Root, must have Enmity or Hatred against God in it, and implies a judging him unworthy of a Being. That Principle of Enmity that inclines and prompts Man to sin, to tread upon GOD's Law, would excite him to destroy

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GOD

GOD, were it possible ; every Sin aims at no less than the Life of GOD. We say not that every, or any Sinner doth *intend* the Destruction of GOD, but that 'tis the *Aim* of every Sin. A Man in every Sin aims at the Advancement of his own Will above that of GOD's : And could the Sinner attain his End, GOD would be destroyed ; for GOD cannot survive his Will. He can as soon outlive his Being as his Glory, and he that aims at the one, aims at the other also ; and this is the Case of every Sinner. Now I have made it good, That every Sin has *Murder* in it ; and consequently that all who have sinned, as ye all have done, have committed *Murder*, and that of the *worst Sort*, *Self-murder*, *Soul-murder* ; nay, and *God-murder* : And if the Blood of the Body of another shall be required at the Hand that sheds it, what do you think will be the Case of such as have shed the Blood of a Soul ? And if it stand hard with such, what will become of the Murderer of GOD ? Sure, if simple Murder be *avenged*, then Self-murder, Soul-murder will be *avenged seven Times more* ; and if Soul-murder be so evil, and bring complicated Destruction upon the Guilty, what, O Sinners, think ye will be the Case of these who shall be found *Conspirators* against the *Life of GOD* ?

Now, can ye think the Crime alleged against you small, after we have a little opened it to you ? sure he who will, must be totally destitute of all Sense of GOD, or of *Religion*, nay, or *Reason*. What is grievous and heavy, if the Charge of *Atheism*, *Idolatry*, *Blasphemy*, *Robbery*, *Rebellion* and

and Murder be not so? And we have made it appear that our Plea, or rather God's Plea against you, amounts to no less. But this is far from being all that we have to say in the *Justification* of God, and for your *Condemnation*: These Sins have,

Thirdly. Aggravations as dreadful and Guilt-enhancing as they themselves are great and monstrous. You have sinned, and consequently are guilty of Atheism, Idolatry, Blasphemy, Robbery, Rebellion and Murder: But not simply of these *Abominations*, as in *themselves*; but as they are attended with a great many *fearful and killing Aggravations*, which add extremely to the Score of the Provocations, being as it were so many Cyphers put behind the Figures, which tho' in themselves they be nothing, yet put behind they swell the Number to a *prodigious Greatness*.

1. All these Evils you have done, notwithstanding a great many notable *Helps* you received *against Sin*. Not to speak of what you had in *Adam*, perfect Strength, perfect Will, and perfect Happiness; you have not only sinned in him against all these, but you who are here present, have sinned against many notable Means afforded you of GOD for your Preservation from Sin. (1.) You have sinned in the Face of all the dreadful Threatnings of GOD's Vengeance against it. You have sinned under the very Thunderings of Mount Sinai. And when the Flames of Hell have out of the Threatnings of GOD been staring you in the Face, even then you have dared to provoke the most High, blighting all these formidable Evidences of his Anger. (2.) You have sinned against dreadul

Examples or Instances of the Judgment of GOD against Offenders. You have as it were seen your Companions turned into Hell, and yet you have persisted in the Crimes for which they were served so. Say now, who of you in some one remarkable Instance or other, has not seen the Judgments of GOD against Sin and Sinners? Sure our Land has of late afforded remarkable Instances not a few? Have you not seen some out of a Fever of Lust fall into Sicknes, and out of this drop into the bottomless Abyss of the scorching Wrath of GOD? and notwithstanding all this you have sinned on, and have not guarded against Sin. (3.) You have sinned *contrary to great and precious Gospel Promises*; these great and precious Promises, that are Breasts full of *Light*, full of *Life Consolation* and *Strength*; full of *Spiritual Supplies* for strengthening poor Men against the Assaults of Sin. (4.) You have sinned *against the glorious Gospel Ordinances*, all of which are designed for the Destruction and Ruin of Sin, and are the Pipes through which the Supplies contained in the Promises are conveyed to the LORD's People. (5.) You have sinned *against all the Strivings of the Spirit of GOD with you*, in *Ordinances* and *Providences*; and consequently have resisted the Holy Ghost in your Sins. (6.) You have sinned against that sovereign Ordinance of God, the Antitype of the brazen Serpent *Jesus Christ*, who is lifted up for that very End, that he may save his People from their Sins, and bids all the Ends of the Earth look unto him for that end, *Isa. xlv. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the Ends of the Earth.* The GOD who has been holding him forth

forth to you, who has provided you in all these great and notable Advantages, is the GOD you have sinned against, whom you have rebelled against, and treated unworthily in these horrid Violations of his Law, which we have enumerated to you above: But this is not the only Aggravation of your Sins, that you had Helps against Sin. But,

2. You have sinned against the God of your Mercies, the God who has loaded you with his Favours. O sad Requital you have given to GOD, for all the Kindnesses he has done to you, since the Morning of your Day. May he not justly, nay, may we not in his Name, lay that to your Charge, which we find him with wonderful Solemnity charging upon his own People? *Isa. i. 2. Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me.* Have not you been nourished and brought up under the Care and by the Providence of God? and has he not met with the same Entertainment at your Hand? Now this is a dreadful Aggravation of your Guilt: For

(1.) 'Tis not One Mercy or Two, but innumerable Mercies, innumerable Kindnesses. Reckon, O Sinners, what the Mercies of GOD are, if ye can. Nay, if ye can count the Stars in the Heaven, or the Sand of the Sea-shore, you may. David says in that lxxi Psal. That he knows not the Number of God's Salvation; and who may not say with him in this? GOD every Day preserves you from many thousands of Inconveniences that would destroy you, and bestows

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upon

upon you many Thousands of Mercies. He loads you with his Benefits, and ye load your selves with your Sins against him. Ye turn the Point of them all as it were against GOD, and make these very Mercies he gives you Weapons of Unrighteousness to fight against him. As his *Favours*, so your Sins are *more than the Hairs of your Head*. Look round you, whatever you see, whatever you enjoy, Clothes, Food, or whatever contributes to the Comfort of Life, that you have from him; and this is the GOD, O Sinners, against whom you have sinned, who treats you thus, *in whom ye live, move, and have your Being*, as the *Apostle* observes, *Acts* xvii. 28.

(2.) As the *Mercies* are *many* against which ye have sinned, so *they are great*. If any can be call'd so, these which you have at the Hand of GOD may. What is great, if all that's needful for *Life and Godliness* be not? And no less does the Provision that GOD has made amount unto, and no less has the LORD God given unto you. Has not *his divine Power* given to you *all Things that pertain to Life and Godliness*? *2 Pet.* i. 3. Have not ye a Gospel Dispensation, Food and Raiment? And what more is needful? And yet against these *great Mercies* you have sinned. When GOD has fed you to the full, *Jeshurun*-like you have waxed fat, and kicked against the GOD that has fed you all your Life long, *Deut.* xxxii. 15.

(3.) Ye have sinned notwithstanding of a long Tract of these *many and great undeserved Kindnesses*; and this extremely enhances your
 Guilt

Guilt. What, would he not be looked on as a very *Monster in Nature*, who would kill the Man that was putting his Meat in his Mouth? Who would watch Opportunities against one who had done him wonderful Kindnesses? and this is *exactly your Case*; you have sinned, and that against the GOD of your Mercies. And therefore,

(4.) Your Sins are all Acts of *monstrous Ingratitude*, than which nothing worse can be laid to the Charge of any Man. It is a Sin that makes a Man worse than the Beast of the Field. *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib*, Isa. i. 3. The dullest of Beasts know who do them Kindnesses, and fawn, as it were, upon these that feed them ordinarily: But ye, O Sinners, have *kicked and lift up the Heel* against the GOD that has fed you all your Life long, and so are guilty of the most horrid *Ingratitude*. And do you thus requite the LORD, O foolish People and unwise? But this is not all that may be said for aggravating your Wickedness in sinning against GOD: For in the

3d Place. You have done all this Wickedness *without any Provocation*. When Subjects rebel against their Sovereign, they have usually some Shadow of Excuse for the taking up Arms against him; but ye have none. What have you to alledge in your own Defence, O Criminals? What *Iniquity*, what *Fault* have ye found in GOD, that ye have gone away backward, and forsaken his Way? Produce your Cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong Reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Isa. xli. 21. What have

have ye to offer in your own Justification? Sure I am, the ordinary Pretences which are upon such Occasions made Use of, to justify a Substraction of Obedience from the Kings of the Earth, will do you no Service. (1.) You cannot, you dare not quarrel GOD's Claim to the Sovereignty of the World. What will, what can make it his Due, if Creation, Preservation, Benefits, and the supereminent Excellencies of his Nature, qualifying him as it were for so great a Post, do not give a just Claim? And GOD has a Right to the Government of the World upon all these Accounts. He made us, and not we our selves; he is the mighty Preserver of Men; he loads us daily with his Benefits; and there is none like him to be his Competitor. (2.) You cannot alledge unjust Laws. You cannot say that he has overstretched his Prerogative, and withholden any Part of that which was your unquestionable Due. No, who dare implead the most High of Injustice? Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Are not all his Laws most just always, and his Judgments most righteous? Is he not a GOD of Truth and without Iniquity? Sure he is. We boldly bid you a Defiance to discover any Thing unjust in that Body of Laws which GOD has given to the Sons of Men. Nor (3.) can ye alledge the Rigour of his Laws, that he is an austere one, and has gone to the utmost he might with you, exacted all that he possibly could. No, he has consulted your Good in the Frame of his Laws, and has contriv'd them so, that every one who understands what he says, must own, that had Mankind been at the making them, they could not by

by all their joint Wit have gone near to make them so exactly answer the Design of the high GOD, his Glory in the Good of the Creature, as he has done. Nay further, your Sins in the 4th Place. Have this Aggravation, that they are committed *without any Prospect of Advantage to countervail the Damage you sustain*. Could ye pretend, that ye can by your Disobedience gain some great Thing; if it did not *excuse* you, it would yet make you *to be pitied*, as being overborn by a very great Temptation: But this cannot, dare not be alledged; no, you *spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which doth not profit*. You can make no Hand of it. You offend the GOD of your Mercies, without any *Provocation*, and that for a *very Trifle*. He has not stood with you upon the greatest, and ye *scruple* the least Points with him; yea, for a very *Shadow of Pleasure* ye stand not to offend him. Nay,

5thly. You sin, notwithstanding the *Interposition of the most solemn Vows to the contrary*; and therefore we might have made this one of the Ingredients of Sin, *Perjury*. All of you who are now before the Lord, stand *solemnly* engaged to *fear, and obey and serve* the LORD, all the Days of your Lives. When you were offered to GOD in *Baptism*, then you came under the *Vows of GOD*; and when you have given your Presence in the publick Assemblies of GOD's People, since ye came to Age, ye have *solemnly owned and ratify'd* those *Vows*; and yet notwithstanding all these, you have sinned against GOD, even your *covenanted GOD*, and therefore there is Per-

Perjury in all your Sins. *You have despised the Oath in breaking the Covenant of your GOD.* Once more in the

6th Place. When you have sinned and continue to sin against GOD, yet ye continue to profess Fealty and Subjection to him, and thereby add fearful Hypocrisy and Mockery to your Wickedness: Like that profane People with whom the Prophet *Malachy* had to do, who dealt traiterously with GOD, wearied him with their Wickedness, robb'd him of his Due, and yet asserted their own Innocency in all; and this throughout the whole of that Book is charged upon them, as an Aggravation of their Guilt. Their Profession they still kept up, and challeng'd GOD to shew wherein they had fail'd of their Duty. Now, this is much your Case, your very Appearance here carries in it such a Challenge. Would ye come here without Scruple, and so boldly rush into GOD's Presence whom ye have offended, were ye not at this with it, that ye judge GOD either knows not, or will not be offended with what ye have done?

Now you have heard your Charge opened, it is not as we have said before, some petty Misdemeanour that is libelled against you, but Crimes as black as Hell, Atheism, Idolatry, Blasphemy, Robbery, Rebellion and Murder, and that against the GOD of your Mercies, over the Belly of a great many notable preventing Means of Grace, in Spite of the most solemn Vows to the contrary, without any Shadow of Provocation, any Prospect of real Advantage, and all this notwith-

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standing a great many Professions to the contrary.

Here is the *Sum* and *Substance* of your *Indictment*, enough to make Heaven and Earth astonished, that GOD does not in Fury fall upon us and make an utter End of us. If every one saw his own *Concernment* in this Matter, how would we be affected? it would make a strange Work in this House.

This, O Sinners, is your Charge: what have you to answer to it? Plead ye *guilty* or *not*? Sure I am, every Soul in this House may say with *Job* in that ix Chapter of his Book, and 20 Verse, *If I justify my self, mine own Mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.* If you plead *guilty*, and take with the Charge, what means this Security we see among you? *Is it not a dreadful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living GOD?* Is it an easy Thing to suffer the Punishment due to such Crimes? Sure none can say it is.

But it may be some of you may be ready to say, indeed we cannot deny our selves to be Sinners. GOD help us, for we have all sinned; but indeed we *never thought*, nor *can we yet think* that every Sin has in it all these monstrous Evils you have mentioned. GOD forbid we were all of us Atheists, Idolaters, Blasphemers, Robbers, Murderers, and perjured Rebels, as you have made us. No, we have indeed sinned, but our Consciences did never accuse us of any such *monstrous Impieties* as these are. To these who shall dare to say or think so, we answer, 1. We do indeed believe that many of your Conscien-

ces did never *accuse* you of any such *Crimes*. Many of you keep the Eyes of Conscience *fast shut* in Ignorance. You fear to bring your Deeds to the Light of a well informed Conscience, lest they should be reprov'd. Others of you have sinned your Consciences *asleep*, or rather you have abused them, so that they are either *faint*, that they cannot *speak loud*, or *stupidify'd* that they cannot *speak at all*. But all this will not prove your Innocence as to the Crimes alledged. Wherefore 2. Who has the *juster Estimate* of Sin, GOD or you? Who knows best what Malignity, what Evil there is in its Nature? Surely GOD knows best what the Honour of his own Laws and Authority is, and how far 'tis trampled upon by every Sin. We are but of Yesterday, and know nothing. 3. Whose Word, think ye, will stand, *GOD's* or *yours*? GOD has by his *Word* represented no less to be in it than we have said to be in it, and therefore there is no less in it. GOD will reckon so, and deal with you not according to the *Judgment* ye make of Sin, but that which he makes. We have made it appear from the Word of God, that Sin is such as we have represented it; and if ye think more mildly of it, be doing, and *behold the Issue*.

Having thus opened to you your *Indictment*, I shall now proceed

II. To lead *Witnesses* against you to prove the Charge, according to the Method we laid down for the Management of this Business in our Entry upon the Improvement.

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But before we begin this Work, we shall briefly obviate a Difficulty that may be started against the Whole of what we are to say under this Head. To what Purpole is it (may some say) to *lead Witnesses* to prove a *Charge*, which is *confest*? Who denies this, that they are Sinners? every one will readily own so much; and therefore any Thing that's said to *prove* such a Thing, seems perfectly lost. To this shortly we say. (1.) Tho' every Body *acknowledges* that they are guilty; yet few, *very few*, *believe* to be true what they themselves are ready to say in this Matter. We all own our selves *guilty of Sin*; but were it believ'd, would not every Eye be full of *Tears*? every Heart full of *Fears*? Would not our Knees *Beshazzar-like* beat one against another, every Face gather Paleness, and every Mouth be full of that Enquiry, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved*? Sure they would; and that it is not so, is a clear and unquestionable Proof that we do not *really* believe what we say. (2.) Were our only Design to justify GOD in any Measures he has taken, or may take to punish us, then indeed such an *Acknowledgment* were sufficient to found a Sentence of Condemnation on, and to free GOD from any Imputation of Injustice in punishing them who *acknowledge the Crime*: But our Design is of another Sort; we are to study to bring you to such a Sense of your Sin, as may put you to enquire for a Relief. And therefore (3.) We are to use all Methods which may in any Measure *contribute* to the Furtherance of this Design; we are to essay all Ways to *awaken* you
out

out of that Security wherein you are like to *sleep on*, till you be entirely ruined, till there be no Remedy or Relief for you.

This *Prejudice* being taken out of the Way, we shall now proceed to *lead the Witnesses* against you. We have laid the *blackest of Crimes* to your Charge, and we have the *strongest Evidence* that you are *guilty*: For we can *prove Guilt* upon you by *Witnesses*, which may be compared with any, either as to Capacity or Integrity; Witnesses who are *faithful* in this Matter, and will not lie, according to the Character given by the wise Man, *Prov. xiv. 5. A faithful Witness will not lie.* Witnesses they are who cannot be suspect of partial Counsel, who never would have advised you to sin, and who take no Pleasure in accusing you; and therefore cannot be suspect of *Malice*, or of any *ill or invidious Design* against you, as were easy to make appear of every one of them whom we shall name.

Take heed therefore, we beseech you, to their Testimony. The Gravity and Consequence of the Matter, the Quality of the Witnesses being the greatest in Heaven or Earth, and your own Concernment in the Whole, do joyn in pleading for your Attention. O Criminals, as your *Crimes* are great, so is the *Evidence* we bring against you great: For

1. The *LORD is Witness against you.* As he said of old to his People in that xxix of *Jer.* and 23. so he says to you, Young and Old of you, who are here present, you have sinned; *Even I know and am a Witness, saith the LORD.* GOD, who cannot lie, accuses you as guilty of

Sin

Sin: *And if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us,* 1 John i. 10. Here is a Witness against you, O Sinners, to whose Charge, I am sure, you have nothing to lay. Malice he purges himself of, *Ezek. xxxiii. 11. As I live, saith the LORD, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live.* Could it be any Pleasure to him to ruine the Work of his own Hands? No sure.

2. *Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of GOD, the Amen and faithful Witness, gives in Evidence against you.* He came to bear Witness to the Truth, and this was one of the great Truths to which he bare Witness, That all have sinned, and therefore are under a Sentence of Condemnation, which can no otherwise be repealed, but by believing on the Name of the only begotten Son of GOD, *John iii. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of GOD.* Christ's very Name bears Witness to this Truth. He is called *Jesus*, because he shall save his People from their Sins, *Matth. i. 21.* And how could he save them from their Sins, had they none?

3. Guilty you are, for the Spirit of Truth, *John xiv. 17. calls you so.* 'Tis one of the Offices of this glorious Person of the ever blessed Trinity, to convince the World of Sin, *John xvi. 8. And when he is come, he will convince the World of Sin.* If this glorious Witness would now speak, as sometimes he has done, we should then need
no

no more Witnesses. He would finish the Evidence, and make it answer our Design. Thus we see that there are Three in Heaven that bear Record, and set to their Seal to this great Truth, *the Father, Son and Spirit*. Now, sure we cannot *refuse* what they bear *Testimony* to. Any Crime however great, is sufficiently proven by the concurring Testimonies of Two Men; and *if we receive the Witness of Men, the Witness of GOD is greater*, 1 John v. 9. But moreover in the

4th Place. *GOD's Deputy in your Bosoms* is a *Witness* of this great but sad Truth that ye have all sinned. Ye are *Witnesses against your selves*, and have actually given *Testimony* against your selves in this Matter, and that (1.) In your *Baptism*. When you were baptized you did then own your selves guilty; for as *the Whole need not the Physician but the Sick*, so the *clean* need not washing, but the *defiled*; and he who washes owns himself defiled. (2.) Your *Attendance* on Gospel Ordinances is a *Testimony* to this Truth, That you have sinned; for they all level at the Salvation of Sinners. (3.) The very *Name* whereby you are call'd, is a *Testimony* given to this Truth. *Christians* you are called, and if any Body should deny you to be so, you would take it very highly, and look upon it as a notable Indignity done you. Well, if ye be *Christians*, that is, the *People of Christ*, then you are *Sinners*; for he came to *save his People from their Sins*. Matth. i. 21. (4.) Is there any among you that ever *prayed for Pardon of Sin*? Sure, these who have not *done so*, deserve not the Name of *Christians*; and these

these who have *done so*, whether Young or Old, Rich or Poor, have *born Witness* against themselves in this Matter. And there is one Day, when your *Consciences* that may now either be *silent*, or obliged to speak so *slow* that it can scarce well be heard, shall not only *speak* to make you hear it, but *force* you to speak this sad Truth, so that others may hear it distinctly. But further,

5. *The Scriptures bear Witness against you, that you have sinned.* This is every where their Voice: The Book of GOD is full of this *certain and sad Truth*. Look but forward to the 10 *Verse* of this *Chapter*, and there you shall see a Cloud of Testimonies to this Purpose. *As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after GOD. They all are gone out of the Way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doth Good, no not one.* Among all the Race of *Adam*, the Scriptures of Truth make not *one Exception*, and therefore ye are all *guilty*; for the *Scripture cannot be broken*, John x. 35.

6. *The Ministers of the Gospel bear Witness against you, that you have sinned.* This is our Work, to be *Witnesses* to the Truths of GOD, of which this is one, That all have sinned: And to this Truth we give Testimony. (1.) In that the very Design of our Office *proclaims* this Truth, and asserts the undoubted Certainty of it. What the Design of our Office is, the *Apostle* in that 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. shortly tells us, 'tis to *save our selves and them who hear us*. We, and ye who hear us, are *Sinners*, because we need to be

saved. An *Office set up* for the saving of Souls, is a standing Testimony and Witness to this Truth, That all have sinned : And when a Minister comes to any Congregation, then 'tis one Part of his Business to *bear witness* for GOD, that all of them have *sinned*. (2.) We give a Testimony to this Truth, That ye have sinned, in as far as we do proclaim to you in GOD's Name, and by the Warrant of his Word, That ye have sinned, and thereby come short of the Glory of GOD (3.) We give a Testimony to this great Truth, when we *preach Christ* to you ; for the whole Gospel Revelation goes upon this Supposition, *That all have sinned*. When we offer you a *Saviour* we assert that you are *lost* ; When We press you to employ a *Physician*, we assert that you are *sick* ; when, in *Christ's* stead, we *intreat and beseech* you to be reconciled to GOD, we declare you are *Enemies* ; in fine, when we *proclaim* to you *Remission* of Sins, we clearly give *Testimony* against you, that ye are *Sinners*, who stand in need of Pardon. (4.) The *Issue* of our Work will prove you all *Sinners*. One of Two will infallibly be the *Issue* of our Work among you ; either we will obtain your Consent to the blessed Gospel Contrivance for the Salvation of Sinners, or we shall have a *Refusal* given us : And whatsoever way it go, we shall in the Issue give in a Testimony to this Truth : If we obtain a favourable Answer, then we must *bear Testimony* that you did receive *Christ* our LORD upon his own Terms, and therefore were *Sinners* ; if you *reject the Counsel* of GOD against your selves, then we must *bear witness* that

that you are *guilty* of the greatest Sin which any of the Sons of *Adam* can be guilty of, *Unbelief*, which makes *God a Liar*, as the *Apostle John* has it, 1 *John* v. 10. *He that believeth not GOD hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that GOD gave of his Son; and this is the Record that GOD hath given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* Moreover in the

7th Place. *The whole Creation asserts this Truth, That all have sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD; and consequently that Part of it which ye use, asserts no less of you in particular. The Apostle, Rom. viii. 22. tells us, That the whole Creation groaneth, and travaileth in Pain together until now. These Creatures you daily use, they groan. If your Ears were not deafened by Sin, you might hear the Groanes of the Ground you tread upon, of the Food ye eat, and of the Raiment ye put on. Well, what's the Matter? what occasions these Groanes? The Apostle tells us in the 20 and 21 ver. of that Chapter, 'tis made subject to Vanity, and to the Bondage of Corruption, for the Creature was made subject to Vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope: Because the Creature it self also shall be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the Children of GOD. Here the Apostle asserts (1.) That the Creature is made subject to Vanity, that is, is liable to be abused by Men to other Ends than it was at first designed for: 'Tis subject to this Vanity, of falling short of the Design of its Creation, which was the Glory of GOD, and of being abused to his Dishonour through*

the Corruption of Man. (2) He asserts that it was *not willingly made subject to it*. O Shame, the brute Creatures condemn Man. Man was *willingly* subject to Vanity, did willingly desist from the Prosecution of that which was the Design of his Creation. The rest of the Creatures are passive in it; 'tis a *sort of a Force* put upon them. 'Tis a Violence done to the Creatures, when they are abused to the Service of Sin: 'Tis contrary to their very Natures; for they still continue according to the Laws which GOD set them in the Beginning. (3.) The only Thing that makes them continue in Being when they are so abused by Man, is the Appointment of GOD. GOD continues them in Being, not for this End, to be abused to a Subserviency to the Lusts of Men, tho' they make this Use of the Goodness of GOD; but that by the continued Effects of it, and Proofs of undeserved Kindness, he may lead them to Repentance. (4.) The *Apostle* asserts, That the Creation shall be a Sharer with the Sons of GOD in their glorious Delivery from the *Bondage of Corruption*, that is, When the Children of GOD, these who have received *Christ*, and by him Power to become the Sons of GOD, shall be fully freed from the Remainders of the Guilt, Power, and Pollution of Sin, then the Creature shall no more be used contrary to GOD's Design in its Creation, but shall, in the Hand of the rational Creature, again become an Instrument for shewing forth the Glory of GOD, as it was at first designed to be. And to shew that the Condition of the Creature requires this

this. He (5) in the 22 *ver.* asserts, That the whole Creation *groueth*, that is, *complains of its hard Usage*, of its being abused by Mens Sin: And he extends this to the whole Creation, that there may be no Access for any who use the Creatures to free themselves of that which the Complaint runs against, *to wit*, Sin. How can any free himself of Sin, while all his Enjoyments witness against him that he has sinned? O Sinners, the Sun that shines upon you groues that it must give Light to a Sinner, one who uses the Light for an Encouragement to sin against GOD. The Ground ye tread upon groues with the Weight of Sinners? The Food that feeds you, complains that it must be so horribly perverted, as to serve the Lusts of a Sinner, as to furnish one with Strength to sin against GOD. See *Hab. ii. 11. Jam. v. 3.*

8. The Judgments of GOD bear witness against you. As many Rods as have ever been upon you, as many Witnesses are there of this sad Truth. The Rod of GOD speaks; for we are commanded to hear the Rod, *Micah vi. 9. The Lord's Voice crieth unto the City, and the Man of Wisdom shall see thy Name: Hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it.* Every Stroke that the Hand of GOD lays upon us, speaks; and the first Thing it says, is, *Ye have sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD.* For Affliction doth not spring out of the Ground, nor doth Trouble arise out of the Dust. And here we may boldly with *Eliphaz* in that *iv. of Job* and 7. challenge you to give one Instance of any Innocent who ever suffered the least Wrong or

Trouble. *Remember, I pray thee,* says he to Job, *who ever perished being innocent? or where were the Righteous cut off?* As if he had said, Search the Records of ancient Times; rub up thy Memory, and give me but one Instance of any Person who suffered and was not a Sinner. I defy thee to give me one Instance. Indeed he was out in the Application of that unquestionable Truth; for he did thence endeavour to infer that Job was a Hypocrite. As to the Application, we are not concerned in it; but for the Truth it self, that we own, and challenge you to instance any. Our blessed LORD indeed was free of *persona* Failings, but not so of *imputed* ones; for the LORD *laid upon him the Iniquities of us all*, and he *was wounded for our Transgressions*. And therefore his Sufferings are no ways inconsistent with this Truth, That none suffer but Sinners; and therefore your Sufferings are a Proof, and do testify that ye have sinned; for *GOD doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the Children of Men*, Lam. iii. 33. He takes not Pleasure in afflicting his own Creatures; but when he does it, it is for their Sins. What GOD, in his Sovereignty, may do, as to the punishing, or rather afflicting of an innocent Creature, we shall not determine. Learned Men have learnedly, I may say, play'd the Fool, or trifled in debating this Point, the Determination whereof makes nothing to Edification, were it possible to determine it satisfiyingly. If any should ask me, Can GOD punish or afflict an innocent Creature? I should answer, (1.) That Questions about what
GOD

GOD *can do*, are dangerous, and may for most Part be forborn: (2.) Punish an innocent Creature he *cannot*, for that presupposeth a Fault. (3.) GOD in the first Formation of his Creatures did set them such a Law for their Rule, as did lead them directly to the highest Perfection their Natures were capable of; and they walking according to that Rule, i. e. being innocent, 'tis hard to conceive how they could fall short, or in any Measure swerve from the End. If it be still enquired, whether GOD may not in his absolute overignty pass over this, which seems to be the fixed and settled Order of his Conduct towards the Creatures, and afflict them, or suffer them to meet with Inconveniencies, while they hold close to the Rule that GOD has set them; if I say any state the Question thus. Then (4.) I shall only propose another Question to the Enquirer, Can there possibly fall within the Compass of GOD's Knowledge a Design which will make it worthy of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness to do so, to break this Law of Nature, which is every way suited to his Wisdom and Goodness? If he say there may, then he is obliged to produce it, which he will find hard enough to do: If he say not, then he determines the Question in the Negative, but *dangerously enough*; for who knows the infinitely wise Designs which may fall within the Compass of the Thoughts of the omniscient GOD, whose Ways and Thoughts are as far above the Thoughts of Man, as the *Heavens above the Earth*? But whatever be in this nice Debate,

wherein we shall not immix our selves, the Truth we have advanced is certain, That no Instance can be given wherein GOD has *afflicted* those who have been *absolutely free* from Sin, inherent or imputed : And therefore the Rods of GOD are Witnesses against you that ye have sinned. Speak, O Sinners, did you never meet with an Affliction in Body or Mind, in your Persons or Families, in your selves or in your Relations, young or old ? Who, or where is the Man or Woman that never had a Cross ? I believe that Person is scarce to be found in the World who has no Complaints, *that is*, who has no Crosses. Well then, as many *Crosses* as ye have had, as many Witnesses are there giving in Testimony against you, that ye have sinned. For no Sinning, no Suffering.

9. In fine, to name no more Witnesses, *Death the King of Terrors is a Witness against you*, and gives Testimony against all, that they have sinned ; for the *Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. vi. 23. 'Tis only Sin that gives Death a Power over you. If any of you can plead Exemption from Death, then you may with some Reason plead Freedom from the Charge we have laid against you ; but if not, then in Vain will all Pretences, Shifts and Evasions be. It may be now we shall not, no not by the Testimony of all the *famous Witnesses* we have led against you, bring you to a *Conviction of Sin* : But when Death, the King of Terrors, begins his Evidence ; he will convince you, ere he have done with you ; or he will send you, where ye shall

shall be convinced not much to your Comfort. Death is Serjeant to the great King; and when he takes you, arrests you, cites you anon to appear before the Bar that's in the higher House, how will your Hearts fail you then? O Sinners, the Sight of the *grim Messenger*, Death, of the *Executioner* Satan, of the *Place of Torment*, Hell, and the awful Solemnity of the *Judge of the Quick and the Dead*, will supersede any further Proof, and will awaken the most sleepy Conscience, which will then be not only Witness but Judge, and even Executioner, to these who shall not be able to plead an Interest in *Christ Jesus*, who have never been convinced soundly of Sin at the Bar of the Word.

Thus we have made good our Charge against all and every one of you, by the Testimony of a great many Witnesses of unquestionable Credit: 'Tis therefore high Time, O Sinners, for you to bethink your selves what ye shall answer when ye are reproved.

Hitherto we have held in the *General*: We have charged Sin upon you all, without fixing any *particular Sin* upon any *particular Sort* of Persons: Now we come to that which in the next Place we proposed in the Management of this Charge against you; and that is,

III. To make good the Charge by dealing *particularly* with the Consciences of several Sorts of Persons among you, to bring you, if possible, to a Sense of your Sin,

All who are in this House may be ranked, according to the Apostle *John* his Division, into *Children*, *young Men* and *Fathers*; or into *Children*

children, these of a middle Age, and old Persons. Under young Men and Women are comprehended all these, whether they have Families or not, who are not come to declining Years, who are yet in the Flower of their Strength and Vigour. To each of these I would apply my self in a Way of Conviction, and endeavour to bring them to a Sense of Sin, and that even of particular Sins.

But that I may proceed in this with the more Clearness, I shall premise a few Things, which may clear the Way to what we design upon this Head. And,

I. There are two great *Designs* which every Man should continually aim at, *Usefulness here, and Happiness hereafter.* We come not to the World, as some foolishly apprehend, to spend or pass our Time, and no more of it. No, GOD has cut us out our Work. We are all obliged in some one Station or other, to lay out our selves for the Advancement of the Glory of GOD in this World. Every one is furnish'd with Endowments more or less. To some GOD has given an ample Stock, *many Talents*; to some *fewer*; and to some but *one*. All have received, and if all do not employ their Endowments, put the Case they appear very inconsiderable, they will find it hard to answer for the Misimprovement. He who had but one Talent, for his Neglect of it had a dreadful Doom pronounced against him, *Matth. xxv. 30. Cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkness: There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* We are not born to our selves only, but to the World, and there-

therefore we should design Usefulness in it ; and withal should take a due Care of our own principal Concern, the *Salvation of our Souls*. If he who provides not for his own Family, has denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel, *1 Tim. v. 8.* what must he be that provides not for his own Soul ?

2. Whatever *Thoughts, Words, or Actions*, have no Usefulness or Subserviency to one or other of these Ends, are *sinful* : By the Law of GOD and Nature this holds true. If we do, speak, or think any Thing that has no Tendency to promote either our temporal or eternal Happiness, then in so doing we sin against GOD ; we throw away these Powers of speaking, thinking and acting, upon that which GOD never designed them for, and this is a manifest Abuse of a Talent bestowed by GOD. The LORD complains of *Jerusalem's* indulging vain Thoughts, *Jer. iv. 14.* *O Jerusalem, wash thine Heart from Wickedness, that thou mayst be saved : How long shall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee ?*

3. Much of our Fitness or Unfitness for prosecuting these Ends, depends upon the *right or wrong Management* of our Youth. Idleness, Viciousness and Folly, in our Childhood, has a Tendency to incapacitate us in our riper Years, for prosecuting the Designs of our Being. Childhood and Youth are, as it were, a *Formatory, Calm or Mould* wherein Men are cast ; and such usually do they continue to be, as they then have been *formed* ; which lets us see how much depends upon the right Management of Children, of which the *wise Man* was well aware

ware, as we see *Prov. xxii. 6. Train up a Child,* says he by the Spirit of *GOD, in the Way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

4. These Actions in Children which People overlook generally, and judge scarce culpable, yet are upon a *double Account* evil; first, in that they flow from a *bitter Root* that cannot bring forth good Fruit; I mean that cursed Bias and Depravity of Nature, which prompts to Evil, to that *only*, and that *continually*: And then, because they have a *Tendency to incapacitate* for the future. An ill Habit contracted when young, cannot soon be worn off. Nay, unless Grace do interpose, and that with more than ordinary Influences, some vitious Habits contracted in Youth, can by no Pains or Endeavours be laid aside. Had Man's Nature remained incorrupt, as it was in *Adam*, then certainly these Follies and Extravagancies, into which generally Childhood and Youth are precipitate, had not been known; there should not any of these vitious Inclinations have been found, which are now the Bane of Youth and of Childhood.

5. We premise this, That the Law of *GOD* is exceeding broad and extensive, *Psal. cxix. 96. I have seen an End of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Some People do strangely in their deluded Apprehensions narrow the Law of *GOD*. There is a general Mistake here; few, very few, do believe how extensive it is; and therefore most Part are clean and pure in *their own Eyes*, though they be not washed from their Iniquities. But *David*, a Man according

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to GOD's own Heart, a Man instructed of
GOD in the spiritual Meaning of GOD's Law,
entertain'd other Thoughts and Apprehensions
of the Matter : He found it *exceeding broad* and
extensive : For (P.) it extends to *Words* and
Thoughts as well as to *Actions*. Many of you do,
it may be, dream that if ye do no *abominably*
wicked Action, tho' ye live in a Course of vain
and idle Thoughts and Words, 'tis no Matter:
But deceive not your selves in this Matter ; for
GOD judges otherwise. Indeed his Word has
told us, That he will bring every Work into
Judgment, *Ecclef. xii. 14. For GOD shall bring*
every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing,
whether it be good, or whether it be evil. But he
has nowhere told us, that Words and Thoughts
shall go free. Nay, upon the contrary, he has
expresly told us, that we must give an Account of
idle Words, *Matt. xii. 36, 37. But I say unto you,*
saith the Amen and faithful Witness, that every
idle Word that Men shall speak, they shall give an
Account thereof in the Day of Judgment ; for by
thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words
thou shalt be condemned. And in that forecited
Jer. iv. 14. the Removal of vain Thoughts is
indispensably required in order to the Salvation
of Jerusalem ; which says plainly, that an indul-
ged Course of them would inevitably ruine : For
as the Spirit of GOD tells us, Prov. xxiv. 9.
The Thoughts of Foolishness is Sin. And indeed no
Wonder it is that they be repute so by GOD
the Searcher of the Hearts, who knows the
Thoughts afar off ; and be condemned by that
Word

Word that's a Discerner of the Thoughts of the Heart, since all Evil flows from the Thought, Words and Actions being but Indications of the Thoughts of the Heart. And therefore when *Simon Magus* is reprov'd by the Apostle *Peter* in that 8th of the *Acts*, for his wicked Desire to buy the *Holy Ghost*, or rather the Power of conferring the Gift of the *Holy Ghost* by the Imposition of Hands, he is not rebuk'd for his Words, tho' he spoke it, but for his Thoughts, because it was there *Sin* began. *Acts* viii. 20. But *Peter* said to him, thy Money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the Gift of GOD may be purchased with Money. Thou hast neither Part nor Lot in this Matter ; for thy Heart is not right in the Sight of GOD. Repent therefore of this thy Wickedness ; and pray GOD, if perhaps the Thought of thine Heart may be forgiven thee. (2.) The Law of GOD is broad in that it extends to all Sorts of Actions ; not only to these which immediately respect GOD, and these which immediately respect our Neighbour or our selves ; but even to our natural Actions, Eating and Drinking, and to our Plowing, or Sowing, or the like, which cannot so easily be reduced to any of these other Classes : For we are told by the Spirit of GOD, that the Plowing of the wicked is Sin, *Prov.* xxi. 4. (3. The Broadness of GOD's Law is conspicuous in its reaching all Sorts of Persons, young and old, rich and poor, high and low. All Sorts of Persons are bound to their Duty by the Law of GOD, Children as well as others : And a Deviation from it is taken Notice of, even with respect to Children. We are told of their coming into the World

World in Sin, of their being shapen in Sin, of their being estranged from the Womb, and going astray as soon as born, and of their dying for their Sin. *Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me,* says the Man who had made GOD his Trust from his Youth up, *Psal. li. 5.* And in that *58th Psalm*, we are told, that the Wicked go astray in Infancy. *The wicked are estranged from the very Womb, they go astray as soon as they be born.* And the *Apostle* in that *5th* to the *Romans*, from the *12 Ver.* proves even Infants to be Sinners, by their sharing in these Calamities which are the Consequents of Sin : But this could not be, unless the Law of GOD did extend unto, and even bind Children as well as others. A Sense of this Extent of the Law of GOD, even to Children, made blessed *Augustine*, in that first Book of his *Confessions*, *Cap. 7.* bitterly lament, and bewail the Sins of his Childhood, even those which are laught at by most ; such as, Untowardness and Unwillingness to receive what was good for him, but even in that Age, meaning his Infancy, does he say, “ Was it not ill and Sin, to seek with Tears what would have proven hurtful to me if it had been given ? to be angry with these who were no ways obliged to be under my Command, because they would not obey me ? Nay, that even my Parents would not obey me. Was it not ill, that I endeavoured to strike even those who were every way my Superiors, because they would not obey me in these Things wherein they could not have given “ Obedi-

“Obedience without Hurt either to me or some other?” Thus we see this holy Man looks upon these Things as Sins, which are commonly laughed at by others as innocent ; and if GOD would give us such a Discovery of the *Wickedness* of our Natures, and of the *Extent* of the Law, as was given to him, then we would think so too. But the Truth of this might be proven at great length, were it requisite to say any more than what has already been alledged.

6. In speaking to every one of these Three Sorts of Persons, we may have Occasion to name *many Sins* : And therefore we shall here *at once* prove all the *Particulars* we shall name under any of these Heads to be Sin, because it would divert us and detain us too long, to insist under every Head, in adducing Arguments to prove every one of the Particulars we are about to mention, to be sinful. Now, that they are all such, ye will not *question*, if ye carry along, with what has been already said, these Three unquestionable Scripture Truths. (1.) That whatever is done, thought or said, by one whose Heart is *not renewed by Grace*, is Sin. This is the plain Meaning of that Assertion of our LORD’S, *Matth. vii. 18. A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit.* Hence it is that not only the *Thoughts* of the wicked, but his *Plowing*, and his very *Sacrifice* is Sin, *Prov. xxi. 27.* (2.) Whatever respects not the *G’ory of GOD as its End*, is Sin. *1 Cor. x. 31. Whether therefore ye eat or ye drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the Glory of GOD.* (3.) Whatever has no Respect to *Jesús Christ*, as the only one in whom

whom our Persons or Performances can be accepted, is Sin, Col. ii. 17. *Whatever ye do, in Word or in Deed, do all in the Name of the LORD Jesus, giving Thanks to GOD and the Father by him.* All the Particulars we shall name will be found cross to one or all of these Three, and therefore sinful: Tho' we shall not always particularly insist in proving the Sinfulness of every one of them, or in naming the particular Commands of the Decalogue of which they are a Breach.

In the 7th and last Place, we premise, that those of a *middle Age* and of *old Age* are equally concern'd in these Sins which we are to lay to the Charge of *Children*, with the Children themselves, because they were once such. Young Men and old Men were once Children, and therefore guilty of the Sins of Childhood. Old Men were once Youths, and therefore guilty of the Sins of Youthhood: And therefore ye are all, the oldest of you, obliged to take heed what we say to one or another, because those who are old have been young, and those who are young may be old.

The Way being thus clear'd, I shall now proceed to speak particularly to, and endeavour the Conviction of the *Children* of the Congregation which are now present.

Children and young ones, who are this Day hearing me, take heed, I have a Message from GOD to you. That GOD who made the Heavens and the Earth, who made you, and who feeds you daily, has sent me this Day to you, to every one of you, as particularly as if I did name you, *Name and Sirname*, to tell you sad and doleful

News. The youngest of you all has *sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD*, that is, ye have done that for which **G O D** will certainly cast you, Soul and Body, into Hell Fire, if ye get not your Peace made with **G O D** through *Jesum Christ*. You have done that for which **GOD** is so angry at you, that his Heart will not pity you, his Eye will not spare you, unless ye get *Christ*; but as soon as ever your Breath goes out, and none of you can tell how soon that may be, he will without Mercy turn you into Hell, there to be tormented for ever and ever. If ye were not foolish, ye would never *play more*, nor *be merry*, till ye got your Peace made with **GOD**. Now to let you see that 'tis true that I tell you, I shall shew you *what Sins* ye are guilty of before **GOD**.

1. Ye were *born Sinners*, *Psal* li. 5. Your Parents were all Sinners; and as your Fathers were, so are ye Sinners: For *who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? not one*, says **G O D** by the Mouth of *Job* xiv. 4. When ye came into the World, **GOD** might then have sent every one of you to Hell, because ye were then all Sinners: And tho' **GOD** did not then send you into Hell, yet he may do it, and ye cannot tell how soon. If ye take heed, ye may every Day hear of some one or other dying, that was not long before as likely to live as you are, as young as healthy as you are; and if **GOD** shall now come, and call you away by Death, what think you will become of you that are not yet reconciled to **GOD**? ye will all be sent into Hell. But,

2. Tell

2. Tell me, I say, did you ever refuse to do what your Parents, your Fathers or your Mothers, have *commanded* you to do? Do you never remember that either your Fathers, or your Mothers, or your Master, or it may be the Minister from the Pulpit, has told you that you should do some Things, read, pray, be good Scholars, do what your Father and Mother enjoin'd you? Well, and have not ye for all that refused to do it? This is a Sin against GOD; and believe it, *dear Children*, there are some just such as your selves burning in Hell, for disobeying their Parents; and tho' they weep and cry; yet GOD will never let them out thence.

3. Did never any Body *reprove* you for any Thing that ye have done? Did never your Father or your Mother tell you that some Thing, it may be, *Swearing*, or *Lying*, or *forgetting your Prayers*, was a Sin, and would bring you to Hell, if ye did not amend? Well, if they did, was not you *angry* at them? Would you not have been glad to get away from them that told you such Things? And did not your Heart *rise against them*? Well, this also is a great Sin. And if this be not pardoned, GOD will be sure to turn you into Hell for it, *Prov. xv. 10. Correction is grievous to him that forsaketh the Way, and he that hateth Reproof shall die.*

4. Tell me, were you ever desirous to be *avenged*, or, in your own Language, to *have amends* of some that you thought had done you ill? Were not you vexed, thinking how to get even with them, and would not ye have found in your Hearts to have *kill'd* them, or to have

done them some *Mischief*? Well, this is a grievous Sin; for GOD has forbid us to *avenge ourselves*, *R m. xii. 19.* —

5. Tell me, did ye never give any Body *ill Language*? Did ye never miscale your Comrades? when you were angry with your Neighbour or Companion, did ye not use opprobrious or reproaching Names? I fear most of you cannot deny it: Well, this again is another Sin. Our LORD has said, that *whosoever shall call his Brother a Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell Fire*, *Matt. v. 22.*

6. Were you never glad when you could get *out* under your Father, or Mother, or Master's Eyes, that ye might take your Will, and do these Things that ye durst not do before them? Now, this is *downright Atheism*: You did not believe that GOD is every where, otherwise you would not have presumed to do that *before him*, which ye durst not do *before your Parents*. See *Psal. xiv. 1.* compared with *Rom. iii. 10* and *23.*

7. Have not you been *glad*, when the Lord's Day was *over*; or at least, when the Preaching was done, that ye might get your Liberty? Has it not been a Burden to you, to sit so long in the Church? Well, this is a great Sin, which was one of the Grounds of GOD's Controversy with his own People, *Mal. i. 13.* *Isa. xliii. 22.* *Amos viii. 5.* 'Tis to be weary of well doing, against the exprefs Command of GOD, *Gal. vi. 9.*

8. Tell me, have you not been *thinking of other Things* when ye have been in Church hearing Sermon? have ye not been thinking of your Sport

Sport and Pastime ? or it may be *speaking* to one another in the Time of Worship ? This is another Sin whereof you have been guilty ; and GOD counts them Mockers of him, who draw near with their Lips, when their Hearts are far away from him, *Isa. xxix. 13.*

9. Do you pray to GOD Morning and Evening ? I fear there shall many be found who neglect this : And tell me, *dear Children*, what do you think will become of these who *pray not* ? GOD counts them Forgetters of him ; and he says, that *the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget GOD. Mal. ix. 17.*

10. Do ye lie or swear, and so take GOD's Name in vain ? Did you ever swear by the Name of GOD in your ordinary Talk ? Or did ye ever make a Lie to excuse or hide a Fault ? These also are Sins ; and GOD has said, that Liars and Swearers shall have their Part in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, *Rev. xxi. 8.*

11. I will only put this one Question more to you. Did you never go to your *Play*, when ye should have been at your *Prayers* ? Now take heed ; ye know ye have done so. Well, what think ye will be the End of these who do so ? Because ye will not *seek* GOD, he will not *save* you ; he will reject you, when ye have most need of Help.

Now, *dear Children*, I have a great Respect to you : Fain would I have you saved from Hell. 'Tis because I desire your Good, that I have been telling you your Sins. I shall therefore, before I leave you, (1.) Put some few Questions

to you for your *Awakening*. (2.) I shall give you a *Counsel* or Two. (3.) I shall give you some *Encouragements* to follow the *Advices* given you.

First then, I would ask you some few *Questions* ; and I beg it of you to take heed how you hear them : And (1.) tell me, Did ye ever think of *Death* ? if you look at a *Grave* when 'tis opened, there, instead of one that had *Life*, that could speak, walk, and do all the other *Things* which ye can do : Now ye see there is nothing but rotten *Bones*, consumed stinking *Flesh*, which the *Dogs* will scarce come near, and filthy *Gore*. Well, ye will in a little *Time* be *just in that Case* your selves. Ye must die. No doubt ye have heard of some of your *Companions*, or some other *Children* who have died ; and ye cannot tell but ye may die next. (2.) If ye do think of *Death*, *What do ye think will become of you*, if these *Sins* which ye have done, and of which I have now told now, be not forgiven ? Then, without all doubt, you will go to *Hell*. And, O can ye tell *what a Place Hell* is ? 'Tis a terrible *Place* indeed. It may be, you would think it a terrible *Thing* if any should put your *Finger* in the hot *Fire* : And indeed it would be so. What then do ye think will be the *Pain* which ye shall suffer when *GOD* will cast you *Soul and Body into Hell Fire* : And this will surely be your *Portion*, if ye get not *Grace*. (3.) If once ye be cast into *Hell*, do ye think ever to get out again ? I assure you, *GOD* has said ye shall not. Tho' ye weep till your *Hearts* break *GOD* will not hear you. Ye have done with *Mercy* if once ye die in your *Sins*. *GOD's Eye* will not spare ; his
Heart

Heart will not *pity* you. Therefore if ye would escape Hell, I shall tell you,

Second y. What ye must do, by offering you Two o Three good Counsels. (1.) Whenever ye go home this Night, get into some quiet Corner or other, and there *betake you to GOD in Prayer*. Say with the poor distressed Publican, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*. Say, LORD, thou hast promised a new Heart to Sinners like me; and I have need of it, for my Heart is very bad: And say, LORD, give me *Christ*, save me from my Sins for *Christ's* sake. Who knows but the LORD, who hears the Lions and the Ravens when they cry for Food, may hear you? (2.) You that can read the *Bible* or the *Catechism*, read them: But take care before ye read, that ye go and pray to GOD, that he may bless them to you, and make you understand what you read. (3.) Take care that you never *lie, swear, or break the Sabbath*, or commit again these Sins which we were telling you of a little while ago. (4.) *Run out of the Company* of such as do lie, swear or break the Sabbath: For GOD will destroy them that keep Company with such. *A Companion of Fools shall be destroyed*, Prov. xiii. 20. (5.) *Wait on them* who will instruct you; and *follow the good Advices* they give you. Walk with the wise, and ye shall be wise, Prov. xiii. 20. (6.) Be sure that ye *pray to GOD* so soon as ye have got on your Clothes in the Morning, and before ye cast them off at Night. Now, if ye will follow these Advices, I will

Thirdly. Tell you some Things to encourage you in so doing. (1.) GOD has made a *Promise*,

that they who begin soon to seek him shall come Speed. I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me, Prov. viii. 17. (2.) GOD has a great Liking to such as begin to seek him early. He commends them highly; and has left upon Record the Names of some young Converts; such as *Abijah*, in the House of a wicked *Jeroboam*, and good *Isiah*, whose early Piety is much commended, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. In the Eighth Year of his Reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the GOD of his Father David: And this is left upon Record, for making others to begin early to seek GOD. (3.) *Jesus Christ* in the Days of his Flesh, was willing to entertain, with the most tender Affection, little children that were brought unto him; and when his Disciples would have kept them away, he rebuked them, and then said, Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, and he took them up in his Arms, and put his Hands on them, and blessed them, Mark x 14, 16. And I can assure you, he is no less kind now, than he was then: For he is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever. Now, if he was so kind to Children that were brought to him, what will he be to these who themselves do come to him? O if ye knew how good he is, you would never be at rest till ye got Notice where he is to be found; and then ye would go to him, and I dare promise you welcome. (4.) That I may have done with you, I tell you for your Encouragement, that if ye will begin early, and seek God, ye shall be amongst these Children of whom the Kingdom of Heaven is. GOD will bless you, and

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all his People will bless you ; yea, all Generations shall call you *blessed*.

Thus far my *Love to your Souls* has led me. I would fain have you saved : And therefore, I *travail in Birth till Christ be formed in you*. O make glad my Heart, make glad the Heart of my great Master, make glad the Heart of all the People of GOD ; and rejoyce your Parents Hearts, in complying with thir wholsom Counsels, which I am sure your Parents will desire, if they be not worse than very Beasts. In a Word, *seek GOD*, and *save your Souls*.

Now, we have done with the *First* Sort of Persons, with whom we undertook to deal. The Tendernefs of their Capacity has obliged us to digress from our Method which we did lay down in the Entry upon this Use, and which, by the LORD's Assistance, we shall closely follow in what remains.

It may be, some of these who are come to Age, may look upon this as tedious and unpleasant, which we have been upon, because there has been nothing here but what they, it may be, knew *before*; and what, it may be, they judge Parents might inform their Children in. But we must tell such, that the Design of Preaching is not to *gratifie itching Ears* with new Discoveries, but to *reform Hearts* by the old, yet new Truths of GOD, which will never wear old to them who are acquaint with the Power of them ; that Children have *Souls* as well as they ; that their Souls are no less *precious* than those of adult Persons ; that we have the *Charge* of the one as well

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as the other ; that the LORD has sometimes been pleas'd to *reach the Heart* of Children by such familiar Applications ; that we are obliged to be *all Things to all Men*, that so we may win some to *Christ*. In fine, we must tell such, that we are particularly obliged, by our L O R D's Command formerly quoted, to *encourage Children to come to him*, and therefore we could not but endeavour to deal with them, and that in a Way suitable, in some Measure, to their Capacities: What is *old* to you may be *new* to them : And a new Drop of the Influences of GOD's Spirit, would even make these very Truths which *formerly* you have known, have a *new and better* Relish than formerly they had.

I shall now proceed, in the *second Place*, to you who have *stept out* of Childhood into Youth, or into *middle Age*, and shall endeavour to fix Guilt upon you. Hitherto we have made it appear, that you *are* guilty : Now we come to tell you, and to condescend on some *Particulars* whereof you are guilty. We told, nay *prov'd*, that you were defiled : Now we shall, as it were, point to the very *Spot*. We have made it appear that ye have sinned : Now we shall take you to the *Places*, as it were, where ye have sinned, that ye may get no way of shifting the Challenge. And because now we find you in the House of GOD, we shall

1. *Examine* you a little in reference to your Conduct *there*. You have frequently *come here* ; you have frequently *presented your selves before GOD as his People* ; but I fear, if your Carriage

in this Matter be narrowly scann'd, you shall be found Sinners before the LORD in reference to this. I shall, in the Name of that GOD in whose Courts ye tread, put Three Questions to your Consciences. (1.) *What brings you ordinarily here?* Come ye to sacrifice to the World's Idol, Custom, because they are ill look'd upon who stay away? Or come ye to stop the Mouth of a natural Conscience, that would give you no Rest if ye staid away? or come ye to see and be seen? or to gratify Curiosity merely? I fear these be the Designs on which not a few of you come: And if so, then you are found guilty before GOD, who requires you to come upon other Designs; even to wait upon him, that ye may see his Power and his Glory in the Sanctuary, as his People have seen him heretofore. (2.) *What do ye here, when ye are come?* Do ye hear the Word of GOD merely as an idle Tale? Do ye put Truths by your selves, and apply them to others? Do ye suffer your Minds to roam up and down upon the Mountains of Vanity, looking at this or the other Thing or Person? Do ye observe more the Way of the Truth's being spoken, than the Truth of GOD it self? Are you more intent in observing the Instrument than in listening to the Voice of GOD? Let your Consciences speak, and I am sure a great many of these Evils ye will find your selves guilty of. (3.) I would pose you, as to the Fruit of these Approaches. What Good get ye for your coming? Do ye get Convictions, and shift them? Do ye get Calls, and sit them? Do ye hear Reproofs, and hate them? Do ye hear Instructions, and forget them? Who
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of you can clear your selves of these Sins? Sins done in the very Presence of GOD, Sins wherein his Honour and Glory is in a more than ordinary Manner concerned, because they do extremely reflect upon it.

2. We shall next follow you to your *Employments*, and enquire a little what your Carriage is there. I take it for granted that all of you have some *honest Occupation* or other. If there be any who have not, these Persons, as they sin in *wanting*, because thereby they idle away GOD's Talents; so they ly *open to all Sins*. Now, such of you as have Employments, I shall desire you to answer me a few Questions in reference to your Department in them. And (1.) I would know if ye did *consult GOD in the Choice of them*? Did ye make it your Endeavour to understand what GOD was calling you to? GOD, either by giving a Man special *Endowments*, a peculiar *Genius*, with other congruous Circumstances, or by hedging up the Way to all other Employments, or some one such providential Way or other, calls every one to a particular Employment. And therefore, when we engage in any, we should endeavour to understand GOD's Mind in it, what 'tis our Duty to do; for we are commanded, in all our Ways, to *acknowledge GOD*. Prov. iii. 6. *In all thy Ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths*. Now, did ye, in this Step of your Way, acknowledge GOD, I mean, in the *Choice* of your Employments? I fear few dare say that they bowed their Knee to GOD to crave his *Direction*. Well then, here your Iniquities have

have found you out. (2.) Do ye *set GOD before you* in following your Employments? Do ye make it your Business to know how ye may glorify GOD in them? Whatever we do, we are obliged to do it to the *Glory of GOD*. Let Conscience now speak, and it will tell many of you, That to this very Day ye never had a Thought of promoting the Glory of GOD by your Employments. So that here you are found guilty, not of some one Sin only, but of a Tract of Sin, and that even from the Morning of your Day, continued till now. (3.) Do ye *depend upon GOD for a Blessing* upon the *Work of your Hands*? Who of you dare say, That however ye do use Means diligently, yet, 'tis to GOD ye look for the Blessing? And are ye earnest in dealing with GOD that he may succeed the Works of your Hands, and make you prosper in them? (4.) To whom do ye *attribute the Success of them*? When the LORD succeeds the Work of your Hands, do ye heartily bless GOD for it? Dare ye say, That this leads you to praise the GOD of your Mercies, and to walk humbly before him, who deals kindly even with the Unthankful and Sinners, and has given a Proof of this, in giving you Success in these Employments? (5.) When ye are successful in them, *what use make ye of your Success*? Does it engage you to the Ways of GOD, and make you walk more humbly? or are ye lifted up, and forget your selves, and forget the LORD? And do ye spend upon the Service of Sin what the LORD has graciously given to you? Sure, if ye conscientiously

ously put these Questions home to your own Hearts, they will discover very much Sin. But

3. We shall in the next Place take a View of you in your *Converse* in the World, and there see whether we can find you guilty of Sin or not. And with respect to your *Converse* in the World, I would pose you upon a few Things. And

1. I put the Question to you, *What Company do ye make Choice of?* Do ye choose the Company of them that *fear GOD*, or the Company of *irreligious Persons*? I am sure, if many of you deal impartially with your own Hearts in this Matter, ye will find Guilt. Your Consciences can tell, That you have the greatest Intimacy with Persons who have no Religion, Persons who have no *Fear of God before their Eyes*; not regarding what the wise Man long ago observed, *That he that walks with the Wise shall be wise, but a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed*, Prov. xiii. 20. And such are all *irreligious Men* in GOD's account. I would not be understood to extend this too far, as some, through a Mistake dangerous enough, do, as if thereby we were forbid civil or neighbourly *Converse* with Persons that are not religious; for this is not only lawful, but a Duty; we have not only Scripture Commands to this Purpose, but the very Law of Nature obliges us to it: And we are sure, GOD did never by any positive Precept enjoin us any Thing contrary to this. Nay, upon the contrary, we see plainly, That a Walk according to the Law of Nature in this Matter, is highly congruous to Religion. If such Persons do visit us, we may visit them again,
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and carry it friendly. This is one Part of that Courteousness that the Apostle Peter enjoyns us, 1 Pet. iii. 8. *Finally, be ye all of one Mind, having Compassion one of another; love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.* And whereas the Refusal of civil Converse, in enquiring after one another's Health, visiting at some Times, and the like Acts of Kindness, is looked upon by some as a Piece of Strictness and Perfection, it is quite otherwise; for the very contrary is determined to be a Piece of a Perfection, by our great Lord and Master, who is the best Judge, Matth. v. 47, 48. *And if ye salute your Brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Publicans so? Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* The plain Meaning of which is this, A Christian should be a Man every way beyond others, and should have something peculiar in the Whole of his Conduct; but if ye deal only civilly and neighbourly with these of your own Perswasion, with these who in every Thing do jump with you, wherein do ye go beyond the Publicans and Sinners, the most signally impious Wretches that the World can shew again? Even Thieves and Robbers will keep some Correspondence and Civility toward these of their own Sort; but *Christian Perfection* calls for more Enlargement of Soul, and requires that we carry obligingly to all, and perform, as Occasion calls, all the Duties of Love, which comprehend certainly these of civil Converse and Neighbourliness, as the Apostle puts beyond all question, 1 Cor. x. 27. *If*

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any of them that believe not, bid you to a Feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no Question for Conscience sake. Thus we see Christians are allowed to converse civilly with these who are Unbelievers. And indeed not to do so, has a Tendency to bring the Way of GOD into Contempt, and to make Religion to be evil spoken of, and is contrary to the very Spirit of the Gospel, and to these many express Commands which we have of adorning the Gospel, and of conversing, so as thereby we may leave a Testimony upon the Consciences of Men. Nay, 'tis to bear Witness against GOD's Goodness, and to rub Shame upon our Religion, as if it did narrow our Souls, and make us defective in these Duties which it obliges us to abound in. But tho' what we have said doth condemn the unchristian Rigidity of some, yet it will not justify the unwarrantable Choice of Persons who have no Religion, for our Intimates, or for our ordinary and daily Companions. No, we are obliged to guard against this. If we do this, we are out of our Duty, and therefore have no Reason to promise to our selves GOD's Protection. A Person that walks, that ordinarily converses with such Men, has Reason to fear that the LORD may leave him to become like to them: And this Intimacy, I fear, is what most of you are guilty of.

2. I would ask you, *What Company do ye delight most in?* This is a great Indication of the Frame of the Heart. A Man that takes most Pleasure in the Company of irreligious Persons, surely sins in it. Some, when they are in the

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Company of the Godly, carry it as if they thought themselves in Fetters; and when ever they get out of it, to their own Companions again, their Minds are at Ease, and they find *Satisfaction*; as a Man doth that's loosed out of the Stocks. Are there none here whose Consciences can tell them that they are of this Number? Let such look to the 1 *Psal.* and 1 *Verse*, and there they will see how far otherwise they ought to carry it.

3. I would further put the Question to you, *What Converse do you delight in?* Some, it may be, like well enough the Company of Persons that are religious; but 'tis not for their religious Converse, but because they are affable, discreet, learn'd, judicious, or have some other such Qualifications as these. If any of you say ye love the Company of religious Persons; is it for the *Religion* of their *Converse*? I fear few can say it. And therefore few can say they are clean in this Matter. I shall not undertake to discourse of all the Sins of Converse: It were almost endless. Only I would, with respect to your Converse, desire you every Night to put a Question or two to your own Hearts, and thereby you will discover much Sin. (1.) Say, Tell me now, O my Soul, what have I been *doing in Company*? Have I bridled my Tongue? Have I kept it from vain, idle and fruitless Discourse, this Day in Company with others? *James i. 26. If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, that Man's Religion is vain:* And consequently all he doth is Sin. (2.) Have

I endeavoured to be edifying in my Discourse ? Eph. iv. 29. Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers. (3.) Have I spoken evil of no Body ? Tit. iii. 2. Put them in Mind to speak Evil of no Man ; for we our selves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 1. Wherefore, laying aside all Malice, and all Guile and Hypocrisies, and Envy, and all evil Speakings, as new-born Babies desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. One that would observe the ordinary Converse of most Part of People, would be ready to think, that either they never read or heard these Laws, or that they never observ'd what they heard. Look to your selves here, and observe your own Ways, and O what Sin will appear in them ! These three Questions will discover almost innumerable Sins every Day : And if one Day have so many, what will many Days have ? Nay, how many Sins in some Months or Years will you be guilty of ? But

4. If we proceed to consider you as you are related to others, we will be sure to make further Discoveries of Sin in your Carriage. All of you stand some one or more Ways related to others ; ye are either *Masters* or *Servants*, *Parents* or *Children*, *Husbands* or *Wives* : Now every one of these Relations have peculiar Duties belonging to them ; and lay these who contract such Relations, under peculiar Obligations to walk according to the Rules prescribed them of GOD : And therefore we may and do

do sin, in walking contrary to these divine Prescriptions: We shall not attempt to mention the particular Sins you may be guilty of in your several Relations; this were a Work that would almost be endless: Therefore we shall only pitch upon some Generals which may discover to your Consciences that ye sin in all of them. (1.) I say most of you do sin in *contracting these Relations*. How few Masters dare say, That in the Choice of their Servants, they went to GOD for Counsel? And how few Masters can say, that ever they acknowledged GOD in the Choice of their Servants. Nay, it may be, when ye have been anxiously desirous to have good Servants, even then ye have not been at Pains to *consult* GOD; not minding that gracious Direction that's given by the Spirit of GOD, *Phil. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing; but in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto GOD.* Nay, is it not to be feared, That in the Choice of *Husbands and Wives*, few do enquire the Mind of GOD? Now, I am sure, if ye deal impartially with your own Hearts, ye will find that here ye have sinned, and have not acknowledged GOD in your Ways. (2.) Do ye *seek Direction* of GOD, *how to carry in your Relations*? I fear the Consciences of many of you can tell, that ye never are at Pains to enquire in reference to the Duties call'd for at your Hands. Most are quick sighted enough in observing the Advantages or Disadvantages that redound to their temporal Concerns by these Relations, but have never a serious

Thought of the Duties call'd for at their Hand ; and therefore, herein ye may all in more or less find your selves guilty. (3.) Do ye make it your Aim to *promote the spiritual Advantage of your Relations* ? Servants, do ye pray for your Masters ? Masters, do ye pray for your Servants, that they may be acquainted with GOD's Ways ? If not, surely ye sin ; for Prayers are to be made for all, but in a special Manner for those in whom we have so peculiar Concernment. Nay, we fear, which is yet more sad, that there are not a few Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, who pray not for one another. How sad is it to think, that there should, in these Relations, be so much Care for the *outward Man*, and so little for the *inward* ? The Parent will toil himself Night and Day before the Child want Bread, and it may be so will the Child do for the Parent ; and yet, it may be, never one of them spent an Hour in wrestling with GOD about one anothers eternal Salvation. Are there no Consciences here this Day accusing any of Sins in this Matter ? Sure I am, there are here who have Ground sufficient for Accusation.

5. We shall follow you into your *Closets*, and there a little enquire what ye do. (1.) Whether take ye most Time in the Morning for *adorning your Souls*, or for *adorning your Bodies* ? I fear the Soul gets the least Part of your Time : Nay, it may be, some of you will go abroad to your Employments, and never bow a Knee to GOD. Sure, here is Sin enough to sink you lower than the Grave. (2.) If you

do pray in secret, *what leads you to it* ? Is it *Conscience* of Duty ? Is it *Custom*, or some such Principle as this ? I fear few can say, that when they go to Prayer, they do it from a sincere Respect to their Duty ; and therefore I fear, but few can justify themselves as to their Design in the Duty. (3.) When you do pray, is it a *Burden* to you ? Are ye soon weary of it, and glad when 'tis over and by Hand, as it were ? I fear most of your Consciences can tell that it is indeed so, that ye say of the Service of GOD, *What a Burden is it to you* ? (4.) Once more I would ask you, What Good get ye by your Prayers ? Can ye ever say that you were heard ? Can ye ever say, ye received Grace for enabling you to the conscientious Discharge of any Duty ? Most part, I fear, can say no more of their Prayers, but that they prayed, or rather have said *Words*, without any *Sense*, either of the Advantage of doing so, or of the Need they stand in of the Things they ask of GOD in Prayer : Doth not Conscience tell that 'tis so with many of you ?

6. And *lastly*. I would come a little nearer for the Discovery of your Sinfulness. I have a Question or two to put to you, in reference to your *Thoughts*. And (1.) I ask you, What Thoughts are most *numerous* ? Whether spend ye manifest Thoughts about your Souls, or about your Bodies ; about GOD or about the World ; about other Things that contribute nothing to your Happiness, or about that which tends to the eternal Security of your Souls ? Here if ye look in, you will find *Crowds*

of Sins. (2.) What Thoughts take ye most Delight in? If these be carnal and earthly, then such is your Mind; and *to be carnally minded is Death*, Rom. viii. 6. (3.) What Thoughts do ye *allow* your selves in? and to what Sort of them do ye give Way? If these be not such as make for the Glory of GOD, then here ye are found guilty before GOD.

Now, we have done with you of a *middle Age*, in what we have said for your Conviction, we have rather mentioned such Things as are *unquestionably* sinful, than endeavoured to restrict our selves to these Sins that are peculiarly incident to your Age. This we have willingly shunn'd, because it would have obliged us to spend almost as many Sermons, as there are different Ways of Life to which Persons of this Age do betake themselves. Before I proceed to the *third* Sort of Persons, I shall put a few Questions to you. (1.) Tho' ye had been guilty of no more Sins, save these which we charged not long ago upon Children, would not these have been sufficient to have ruined you? (2.) What will then your Case be, who have over and above all these which we have now laid to your Charge, and referr'd to your own Consciences for Proof of what we have said? (3.) When *Generals* make you guilty of so many Sins, what will *Particulars* do? When ye are found guilty so many ways in your Thoughts or Words; for Example, What will be your Case, when you are brought to *Particulars*? If ye may sin by speaking idly, by speaking Ill of others, what will it amount to, when

when every particular idle Word shall be charged upon you? (4.) If every Sin deserves the Wrath of GOD, what will be the Case of these who shall step into Eternity, laden with all these innumerable Evils? How many Hells will their *one Hell* have in it?

Think, and *think seriously*, upon these Things, and I believe ye will find it hard to rest satisfied, till ye understand how such *vast Debts* may be discharged, and how ye shall answer when *reprov'd* for so many, and so great Offences. Think on these Things, I say, and dwell upon the Thoughts of them, till ye be made to see your own Misery, and then the News of a Saviour will be welcome.

I shall now proceed, in the *Third Place*, to speak to you who are *old Men*. Ye whose Faces speak your Age, and tell that ye are quickly to be gone; we are now particularly to address our selves to you, and to make good our Charge of Sin against you, from incontestable Evidences and Proofs. Give Ear therefore, *old Men* and *old Women*; tho' you be posting off the Stage, and, it may be, are within a few Removes of Eternity, yet ye have not perhaps duly considered your own State and Condition: We must tell you in GOD's Name, ye have *sinned and come short of his Glory*. And for Proof of this,

1. We need go no further than your very Faces. What has consumed your youthful Beauty? What has turned that Smoothness which in the Days of your Youth was, it may be, your own Delight, and that of others, in-

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to these many Wrinkles which now every one sees, and ye may feel? has not Sin, or GOD, upon the account of Sin, done it? *Thou hast filled me with Wrinkles*, says Job, which is a *Witness against me*, and my *Leanness rising up in me*, beareth *Witness to my Face*, Job xvi. 8. If ye be not Sinners, tell me, I pray, whence are the unsteady Hands, the dim Eyes, the mouldred Teeth, that Paleness of the Visage, that approaches near to the Colour of that Mould into which a little hence ye are to be turned? Are not all these Things Proofs of your Guilt, and Witnesses against you?

2. Have not ye past through *Childhood* and *Youth*? and have not ye the Sins done in these *Ages* to account for? What, how many, and how grievous they are, ye may in some Measure understand, from what has been discoursed on this Head some Days past. Now sure, if your Consciences have been awake all the while, you might understand your Concernment in these Things, and how deeply guilty ye are, tho' ye had no more to account for but these. It is accounted, by the Spirit of GOD, to be one of the great Miseries of the Wicked, that they shall ly down in their Graves with their Bones full of the Sins of their Youth. *His Bones are full of the Sins of his Youth*, which shall ly down with him in the Dust, Job xx. 11. These, tho' there were no more, will rot your Bones, gnaw your Hearts, and make you lose the Repose which many times ye propose to your selves in the Grave.

3. Ye have had *much Time*, and have, no doubt, *lost much Time*. Many precious Hours and Days and Years are spent and gone, and nothing, or nothing *to purpose*, done in them. And for evincing this, I shall put a few Questions to you about the Improvement of your Time. (1.) What have ye *done for GOD* in it? The great Business ye came into the World for, the great Design of your Creation, was the Advancement of the Glory of GOD. *The Lord hath made all Things for himself, and even the Wicked for the Day of Evil*, Prov. xvi. 4. Now are there not old Men, and old Women here, who have lived all their Days, and dare not say that to this very Day they ever had a serious Thought of advancing the Glory of GOD? To such we say, Ye have hitherto done nothing but sinned; your whole Life has been nothing but one continued *Traff* of Sin. As many Thoughts, as many Words, as many Actions, so many Sins. (2.) What have ye *done for the Church of GOD*? Every one is obliged to do something or other for the Church, *Psal. cxxii. 6, 7. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces. For my Brethren and Companions sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee: Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.* Now, are there not old Men and old Women here, who never shed one Tear for the Church of GOD, who never were concerned for its Welfare. I fear there are not a few here, even old People, who have seen many Changes, but never had any *Concern* for the Church of GOD. If their
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private worldly Concerns went well with them, it was all a Matter to them what became of *Religion*; let it sink or swim, it was all one to them. Such are grievous Sinners before the LORD. (3.) What have ye done for *your Souls*? The LORD has given every one of us a great Work to do. We have our *Salvation* to work out with *Fear and Trembling*. He has given us a Day to do it in; and that Day is to be followed with an Evening wherein none can work. Now, what of this Work is *by hand*? Your Day is almost spent: Is it not the Twilight with many of you already? I fear, I fear, there are here old Men, over whom the Shadows of the everlasting Evening are just ready to be stretched forth, who have their Work yet to begin. O sad and mournful Condition! *A great Work to begin!* a Work that hath cost many waking Nights, and sore Toil and Labour for many Years; and this ye have to begin now, when your Day is almost gone, when your Sun is setting, is as it were going in over the Hill, and ready immediately to dump down, and leave you in eternal Night! This Case were enough even to rend a Heart of Stone, and to force Tears from a Rock, if duly considered. O what Sin? what Folly, what Misery is there here?

4. You have seen many *Providences*, both such as were, of a more publick Nature, and concern'd the *State of the Church* of GOD in general, and such as concern'd *your selves* more particularly. Now here I again enquire. (1.) What *Observations* have ye made? The *Providences*

dences of GOD deserve to have a peculiar Remark put upon them. Remember that thou magnify his Works which Men behold, Job xxxvi. 24. is a Command of GOD that extends to all : And it is a grievous Sin, for which we find a professing People heavily threatned, that they did not regard the LORD's Doings. *Wo unto them that rise up early in the Morning, that they may follow strong Drink, that continue until Night till Wine inflame them : And the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and the Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts ; but they regard not the Work of the LORD, neither consider the Operation of his Hands,* Isa. v. 11, 12. Now, are there not many Providences lost, and therefore as many Sins ? (2.) What Experiences have ye got ? Many Providences afford many Experiences : And they who have managed them to Advantage, have reaped notable Advantages by them, for their Confirmation in the Ways of GOD : And if ye have not done so, ye have as many Sins as ye have lost Experiences. (3.) *Where have they left you ? nearer or further off from GOD than they found you ? Every Providence, Mercy or Judgment that has not brought you nearer to GOD, has carried you further from him ; and consequently therein ye have sinned. O what Multitudes of Sins are here !*

5. As you are guilty by committing Sins of your own, so you have contracted much Guilt by seeing other Men sin, when ye have not been suitably exercised therewith. That we should be exercised with other Mens Sins, the Scripture makes mention expressly. Now, that I may

may let you see how many ways ye have sinned here, I pose you upon it. (1.) You have seen many Sins committed; *what Testimonies have you given against them?* Every one that sees GOD dishonoured, should give a Testimony for him, either by *reproving* Sin, according to the Direction of the Apostle, *Eph. v. 11. Have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but rather reprove them*; or by *withdrawing* from the Society of such, according to the Command of the Spirit of GOD, who bids us *Go from the Presence of a foolish Man, when we perceive not in him the Lips of Knowledge*, Prov. xiv. 7. For sometimes any other Reproof, than by withdrawing may be improper; for the wise Man forbids us to *reprove a Scornor lest he hate us*, Prov. ix. 8. or if this cannot be got done, without the Neglect of moral Duties, there is yet another Way we may give a Testimony against Sin, and that is, by a circumspect Walk, evidencing a Regard to GOD, a Belief of his Threatnings, and the Advantage of Religion. Thus *Noah* reprov'd or condemned the old World, Heb. xi. 7. Now speak, old Sinners, What Testimonies of this Sort have ye given against Sin? As many as ye have *neglected*, as many Sins ye *stand guilty* of before the LORD. (2.) Ye have seen many Sins; *how many Tears have ye shed?* I fear there are here old Men and old Women, who never *figh'd*, who never *grov'd* or *cried*, for all the Abominations that they have seen committed in our Land. 'Tis our Duty to mourn for the Sins of others. There is a Mark of Preservation ordered to be put up-

on the Foreheads of them that mourn for the Sins of the Land wherein they live, *Ezek. ix. 4.* And the LORD said unto the Man that had the Writer's Inkhorn by his Side, Go through the midst of the City, through the Midst of Jerusalem, and set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh, and that cry for all the Abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And in the following Verse, the destroying Angel is commanded to spare neither Old nor Young save only those who have that Mark upon them. I fear there are few Mourners here, among these who have seen many and monstrous Sins. I shall not now speak of the national Abominations which you have seen: But I am sure there are few of you come to Age, who have not heard many horrid Oaths sworn: You have seen horrid Villanies committed; many dreadful Provocations. Now, dare ye say with the Psalmist in that 119 Psal. Verse 53. *Horror hath taken hold of me, because Transgressors keep not thy Law.* It may be old hardned Sinners think little of this Sin; yet GOD is brought in as it were wondring at it, in *Jerem. xxxvi. 24.* when the Roll containing Jeremiah's Prophecies was burnt, 'tis noted as a wonderful a monstrous Wickedness, that they were not concern'd, that they did not mourn; Yet, says GOD, *they were not afraid, nor rent their Garments, neither the King, nor any of his Servants that heard all these Words.* I fear, even these who speak against Sins of others, are guilty of them by not mourning over them. (3.) You have seen many Sins; and how many Prayers have ye put up for the Pardon of them? There is
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an exprels Command to this Purpose, 1 John v. 16. *If any Man see his Brother sin a Sin, which is not unto Death, he shall ask, and he shall give him Life for them that sin not unto Death.* It may be ye have condemned others, and cried out upon them for their Sins, while in the mean Time ye are Partakers with them, because of your *not praying* for them according to this Command.

6. I say to you, Ye are great Sinners, for ye have had *many Mercies*, and I fear have *abused Mercies*. If I should begin here to recount particular Mercies, I might know where to begin, but scarce where to *make an End*. I shall only enquire at you, (1.) Do ye yet know the GOD of your Mercies? *Hos. ii. 8.* I fear many of you dare not say it. (2.) What Improvement have ye made of them? Has the Goodness of GOD led you to Repentance, as it should do? *Rom. ii. 4.* (3.) Once more I ask you, Have ye return'd to the LORD according to the Mercies receiv'd? Put but these Three Questions home to your own Consciences, and I believe they will discover many Sins that ye never yet thought of.

7. Old Sinners, ye have undergone *many Changes*; ye are far decayed: Then let me ask you, (1.) Are your Souls *renewed*, as your outward Man *perishes*? I fear, I fear there are few among you who are bringing forth Fruit in old Age, who, when others fade, are fat and full of Sap, (2.) Has your Love to Sin decayed? If this Change were to be observed, it were a great Blessing; but I fear, that, however Strength may be fail'd so far that ye cannot ful-

fil your Lusts as formerly, yet the old Heart-love to them remains.

8. Old Sinners, ye have seen *much of the World*: And here I ask you, Are ye not guilty (1.) by neglecting many Discoveries of its *Vanity*, which might have been of great use to you, if duly observed? (2.) By retaining the same *Love to it*, after many Discoveries of its Uncertainty and Emptiness?

9. Once more, and I have done with you. Old Sinners, You have lived long, and *Death is at the Door*. GOD has given you much Time to provide for it; and I fear ye are guilty, extremely guilty, by not improving Time: And for discovering your Sin here, I shall lay a few Questions before you, and I plead that ye may lay them home to your own Consciences. (1.) Are ye yet *content to die*? 'Tis the indispensable Duty of all, to be ever content to comply with the Will of GOD in this Matter; and upon a Call, to be ready *cheerfully* to comply with the Will of GOD as to Death, the Time and Manner of it. Now, old Sinners, are ye content? It may be, some of you will forwardly enough answer, That ye are content; but if ye say so, I ask you (2.) Are ye *ready to die*? I fear some are content to die, who are not ready; some may in a Fit of Discontent at the World, upon the back of some notable Disappointment, be so well content to die, that they will lay Hands upon themselves, who yet are very far from being ready to die. If ye pretend that ye are; then for discovering the Truth of what ye say, I enquire (3.) Are your Sins *dying*? A
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Person whose Sins are *lively*, he is never ready to die. (4.) Are ye in *Jesus Christ*? These who are out of him are never ready to die. 'Tis only these who are ready to die in the *LORD*. Rev. xiv. 13. who are ready *indeed* to die. (5.) Is your *Pardon seal'd*? Death will try you; and if your Pardon be not seal'd, ye will find that ye are scarce ready to die. (6.) I put this one Question more to you. Have you *provided* your *Lodgings*? 'Tis high Time, when Mens Houses are falling, to be looking out for new Lodgings. This Tabernacle is ready to be dissolved; have ye a Building of *GOD* not made with Hands secured to your selves? *GOD* has given you Time and Means for doing all this; and if ye have not done it, then ye have sinn'd against the *LORD*, and against your own Souls.

Now, *old Sinners*, if ye lay not to Heart this Warning, and lay not your selves in the Dust before *GOD* for your Sins, then this new Warning will be a dreadful Aggravation among many others of your Guilt. Consider your Case in Time, before it be *too late*. Are there not many who were not born for many Years after you; and who, it may be, are dead many Years ago, and having wrought their Work, have got a blessed Immortality; yet, it may be to this Day ye know not what shall become of your Souls. Think, *old Sinners*, is it not a Wonder that God has given you this Warning after making light of so many: And will it not be a cutting Reflection, if ye *fit* a Warning near to the *twelfth Hour*?

Now,

Now, Children, young Men, and Fathers, old and young, I have by an Appeal to your own Consciences made good my Charge against you, and fix'd a great many particular Sins upon you. I shall now proceed

IV. In the next Place, to shew you what Satisfaction that Sovereign King, at whose Instance and in whose Name I have impleaded you, requires of all and every one of you. His Justice, at any Rate, must be satisfied. 'Tis not congruous to Reason, 'tis not congruous to the Holiness, Justice and Wisdom of the Lawgiver, that Sin should escape unpunished, and therefore 'tis impossible it should pass without some signal and suitable Mark of GOD's Displeasure. He has declared positively in his Word, he has confirmed it in his Providences, that *tho' Hand join in Hand the wicked shall not be unpunished*, Prov. xi. 21. If Angels and Men should lay their Hands and Heads together, unite their Wit and their Power, they shall not preserve one Sin from the Marks of GOD's Displeasure. Some signal and evident Token of it will reach Sin, wherever it is. There needs no Proof of this, after what Christ has met with. And ye must lay your Account with it, that this Punishment will not be some pretty inconsiderable one. It must be in some Measure suited to the Crimes ye stand impleaded of. It must, on the one Hand, hold some Proportion to the Holiness and Purity of that Law you have broken, to the Majesty and Authority of that GOD whose Authority ye have trampled upon; yea, it must hold some Proportion to the several Aggravations of your respective Sins. Lay your

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Account with it, Sinners, escape you cannot his Hands who is every where. *Whither will ye go from his Spirit? whither will ye flee from his Presence? If ye ascend up into Heaven, he is there. If ye make your Bed in Hell, behold, he is there; if ye take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall his Hand lead thee, and his Right Hand shall hold thee. If ye say, Surely the Darknes shall cover you, even the Night shall be Light about you; for the Darknes hideth not from him, but the Night shineth as the Day; the Darknes and the Light are both alike to him, Psal. cxxxix. 7---12. There is no Darknes nor Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may hide themselves, Job xxxiv. 22. from his Eye, or secure themselves against the Inquiry GOD will make, or the Strokes that his almighty Arm will inflict. Punished then Sinners must be. And if ye ask, what Satisfaction will he have of such Sinners? I answer*

1. He will have you punished in your Estates, by a Forfeiture of all. You invaded GOD's Possession; he will cast you out of yours. This is the ordinary Punishment of Rebellion; and we have proven you guilty of Rebellion of the worst Sort. Man, when GOD made him, was Master of a fair Estate. The Sons of Men now may value themselves upon some petty Tenements which many of them hold by no good Right, as we shall see anon; but none of them can vy Possessions with Adam in Innocency. He had a Paradise replenished with all the Rarities of innocent, of incorrupted Nature, all the Delicacies which the Earth did yield, before it lost

its Strength by that Curse which Man's Disobedience brought it under, while it was impregnated by the Blessing of GOD : And as he had this in *Possession*, so he had Heaven in *Expectation*, a noble and seemingly unfailing Prospect of a Paradise above. This was *Adam's Estate*; and this should have been the Estate of his Posterity, his Descendants : But all is *forfeited* by Sin. Had *Adam* stood, he had then transmitted to us a goodly *Heritage*, and none should have had Reason to complain of his Possession : But now we have by Sin forfeited all ; we have no Estate, no Heritage. O Sinners, by your Sin ye have lost the *Right* to all your Enjoyments *here*, and all *Prospect* of any comfortable Being *hereafter*. *Adam* when he sinn'd was banish'd out of Paradise, and that was guarded against him.

But ye will say, We are not *forfeited*; for we enjoy Houses, Lands, Meat and Clothing, and a great many other such Things : How can ye then say that we *lost* all, by what Means get we these Things ?

I answer, (1.) A Rebel sentenced to die, is by the King allowed Food, Raiment, and other Necessaries for the Sustainment of Nature, till the Time of the Execution come : Just so, GOD, for holy Ends not now to be enquired into, having reprimed Man for a while, suffers him to enjoy some such Things, till he see meet to put the Sentence of Death in Execution, and then the *Forfeiture* will take Place. (2.) We say, ye have no Right to any Enjoyment save that just now mention'd. The *Grant* whereby innocent

Man held all his Possessions, was the *Covenant of Works*: This was the Ground of his Security as to what he possess'd, and the Foundation of his Hope as to what he further expected. Now, this Covenant being broken by your Sin, ye have no more *Right* to any Enjoyment. (3.) As ye have already lost the *Right and Title*, so ye have lost the *Sweetness* of all your Enjoyments. Ye toil and sweat, but ye are not satisfied. *What Profit have ye of all your Labour under the Sun?* 'Tis not able to give you *Satisfaction*. This we have at great length made appear in our *Lectures* upon *Ecclesiastes*. (4.) To conclude, in a very little ye will be *entirely depriv'd of all*. The Day of the Execution of the Sentence draws on, when GOD will snatch all your Enjoyments out of your Hands. Now indeed, some have *more*, and some have *less*, according to the Pleasure of the great Judge, who has allowed every one their *Portion*, till the Day of Execution come, and then *all* will go.

2. GOD, at whose Instance ye have been impeach'd of Sin, will have Satisfaction in the *Death of the Offenders*. GOD threatned Death to Adam in Paradise: *In the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Or, *dying thou shalt die*, Gen. ii. 17. and the *Soul that sinneth shall die*, saith the LORD by the Prophet, Ezek. xviii. 20. *for the Wages of Sin is Death*. This is not to be limited to a *natural Death*; no, but is of a huge Extent. It takes in a *threefold Death*, a *Death spiritual, natural, eternal*. Man in Innocency had a threefold Life, either in *Possession* or *Prospect*. (1.) A *Spiritual Life*, which consisted in the Uni-

on of his Soul to GOD, in a Measure suited to his present Condition, and in the Fitness of all his Faculties and Powers for acting and doing what was well pleasing unto GOD. (2.) A *natural Life*, which consisted in the *Union of Soul and Body*. That lovely Pair, his innocent Soul and pure Body, were matched together, and linked to one another by a Thought surpassing Art ; so that they had a most near Alliance, being compacted into *one Person*, by a Ty so strong, as to occasion a notable Sympathy ; and yet so secret, that no Eye could ever see, no Mind ever discover this imperceptible Chain. (3.) Man had then a fair Prospect of *eternal Life*, in a *full and close Union to GOD*, never to admit of any Interruption, or of any such Interposition, as was between Man and him in this lower World. But now upon his Sin, he lost all by virtue of the primitive Threatning of Death to the Soul that sins. Answerably hereunto, God will have you punished with a threefold Death. O Sinners, his Heart will not pity you, his Eye will not spare you. You are already *condemn'd* to die. *He that believeth not*, that is, every Sinner by Nature *is condemn'd already*, says the Spirit of GOD. Nay more, ye are not only condemned already, O Sinners, but moreover the *Execution* is begun ; the Fire of GOD's Wrath is already kindled against you ; there are some Drops begun to fall, before the Shower come that will entirely destroy you. (1.) You are *spiritually dead*. I speak to all of you who are not savingly changed by Grace, being begotten

again from the Dead, by the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*. You are dead in Trespasses and Sins, utterly unmeet to entertain Communion and Fellowship with GOD. As a dead Man cannot speak, act, or exercise any vital Power; so neither can ye act any Thing that's *spiritually good, or well pleasing* to GOD. This is a heavy Punishment, tho' as yet ye be not sensible of it. (2.) *Natural Death*, that consists in the Separation of the Soul from the Body, is already begun. Every Disease that seizes upon our Bodies, is like the *Posts* that *run to meet another, to tell the King of Babylon that his City was taken at one End*, Jer. li. 31. Every Disease makes a Breach in our Walls, and tells that all will in a little fall *down flat*. Your very Life is nothing else but a Succession of dying; Every Day and Hour wears away Part of it; and so far as it is already spent, so far are ye already *dead and buried*. Diseases and natural Decays do lay close Siege as it were to your Bodies, routing their Guards, battering the Walls of your Flesh, and forcing your Souls to quite the Out-works, and retire into the Heart: And every Minute, ye have Reason to fear that ye may be taken in and become a Prey to Death. In one Word, O Sinners, ye are the Mark at which Justice *shoots its Arrows*. Do not ye see sometimes the Arrow flee over your Head, and slay some great Person your Superior? Sometimes it lights at your Feet, and kills a Child or a Servant, or those who are inferior; sometimes it passeth by your left Hand, and kills an *Enemy*, at whose Death possibly ye rejoyce;
and

and anon it strikes the *Friend* of your *right Hand*; and possibly the very next Arrow may *strike you dead*, be ye young or old, *eternally dead*, and hurry you into Hell.

3. Your Death will not do all; this *Punishment* reaches your *Honours*. Rebels are wont to have their *Honours torn*: And so GOD has determined with respect to you, O Sinners. Man was in his first Estate advanced to a high Dignity, he was the *Friend* as well as *Subject* of God; and he was his Deputy in this lower World, as the *Psalmist* tells us. *Thou madest him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands; thou hast put all Things under his Feet, all Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beasts of the Field, the Fowl of the Air, and the Fish of the Sea, Psal. viii. 5.* Thus was he crown'd with Glory and Honour: But now, O Sinners, the Sentence is past against all the Race of sinful *Adam*: Thus saith the LORD, *Remove the Diadem, and take off the Crown from the Head of Sinners. The Crown is fallen indeed from your Head.* Now, tell me, O Sinners, do not ye already feel the direful Effects of this Part of your Punishment? These Beasts which were once Man's *Subjects*, are now turned his *Enemies*, because he is God's *Enemy*. Do not the very *Flees* insult you, and make sometimes your Life uneasy? Do not the wild Beasts of the Field terrify you? Are not some of them daily making *Inroads* upon you, devouring your Cattle, carrying away your Substance? And even these which are most serviceable, and seem to retain something of their Respect to Man, sometime their Lord, do they not rebel? Doth not

the Horse sometime throw his Rider, the Ox gore his Owner? Thus Man has lost his Honour; nay, now he who once did reign, is become Sin's *Slave*, and thereby falls under the Lashes of Sin and Satan's Slaves. This, O Sinners, is a Part of your Punishment.

4. This yet will not satisfy Justice. GOD pursues the Quarrel to *Posterity*. *I am a jealous GOD*, says he in the Threatning annexed to the Third Command, *visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children*. Rebels Children suffer with the Fathers in all Nations; and shall not Rebellion against GOD be as severely punished, as that which is against an earthly Sovereign? If an *Achan* steal a *Babylonish* Garment, and sin against the GOD of *Israel*, then he and his whole Family shall fall, *Man* *Wife*, and *Child*: Nay, and the very Household-stuff, his Ox and his Asses. GOD will pursue the Quarrel to a *dreadful Length*. You may see this terrible Tragedy described by GOD, in that 7 Chap. of *Josh.* from the 24 Verse. GOD will spare nothing that Sinners have used. Because Sinners have trode upon this Earth, it must undergo the *Fire* at the last Day, before it can be freed from the Bondage of Corruption. O Sinners, ye transmit a sad Legacy to your wretched Posterity! a Legacy of which the distressed Church, *Lam. v. 7.* heavily complains, *Our Fathers have sinned and are not, and we have born their Iniquities.*

5. Once more; God pursues his Quarrel yet further. He will have your Names eternally ruined. *The Memory of the Wicked shall rot, Prov. x. 7.*
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After he has killed your Bodies, and Souls, and Children, and ruined your Estates, then he will kill your Names that there shall no Remembrance of you be upon the Earth, unless it be the Stench of a rotten Name. Thus will the Lord deal with you, O Sinners. The Whirlwind of the LORD, that goes forth with Fury, will blow away all your Enjoyments, turn you out of all your Possessions. The LORD will banish you his Presence. That almighty Arm that stretch'd out the Heavens, will tear your Souls from your Bodies, and throw you headlong into Perdition: The Weight of infinite Wrath will sink you down into the bottomless Pit; and Omnipotence will dig a Grave for your Memory, wherein it will eternally rot. For the Greatness of your Iniquity ye may expect this. *This is thy Lot, the Portion of thy Measure from me, saith the LORD, because thou hast forgotten me and trusted in Falshood,* Jer. xiii. 25. This is the Satisfaction God requires: And think on it; this Way will he be glorified in your Ruin, if ye continue in your Sins.

I have at some Length proved you all to be Offenders, that God demands a Reparation, and what that Reparation is, which he doth demand of his injured Honour, I have at some Length made appear; I now proceed, according to the Method proposed,

V. To demonstrate the Reasonableness of this Demand. I have shewn your Ways to be most unequal; now I come to shew that GOD's Ways are most equal, and that he acts very reasonably, in demanding so high: And this will appear to the
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Conviction of the most obstinate Sinner, if the Considerations we offer for clearing this be *duly weighed*. And

1. Let it be considered, That *Sin deserves such a Punishment*; and therefore 'tis very *just* to *infect* it. Nay, I might perhaps run this a little higher, and assert that therefore it would be *unjust* to require any *less*, any *more easy* Punishment. That *Sin deserves it*, is very plain, if we consider

1. *Against whom it strikes*. This is the Way of measuring Offences agreed to all the World over, that the Measure should be taken from the Consideration of those against whom they strike. This we may observe in the Laws of GOD, which enjoin that Offences shall be punished according to the Quality and Condition of the *Offenders* and the *Offended*. The Daughter of the high Priest, if she committed Uncleanness, was to be burned without Mercy, *Lev. xxi. 9.* so was not every one who was guilty in that Way. *Again*, he that curseth his Father and Mother is adjudged to die, *Lev. xx. 9.* so was not he that curseth his Equal. The same Measure is kept in our Laws: If one kills his Equal, then he dies; but there doth not thereby redound any Injury to his Posterity; but if a Man kills the King, makes any Attempt against the Government, then *Life, Lands, Name* and all goes. Now, if we consider in this Case the *Quality* of the Offender, a poor mean *Worm*, that dwells in Cottages of Clay, that has his Foundation in the Dust, that's crushed before the Moth, that holds all of GOD.

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And then on the other Hand, consider him who is *offended* by every Sin, not a Prince, or some great Man, who is but Flesh and Blood at the best ; but *the high and lofty One that inhabits Eternity*, he who is a great GOD, and a great King, above all the Earth : Behold, the Nations are as a Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as *the small Dust of the Balance* : Behold, he taketh up the Isles as a very little Thing ; and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the Beasts thereof sufficient for a Burnt-offering. All Nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and Vanity. To whom then will ye liken GOD ? or what Likeness will ye compare unto him ? There is no Proportion here. Now, if it deserve so severe a Punishment that's committed against Man, what must it not deserve that's committed against this GOD ? As it were injurious to compare GOD to Man ; so 'tis injurious to compare the Demerit of any Offence committed against Man, and the Demerit of that which is committed against the great GOD.

2. Consider the *Damage that Sin doth* ; and then we will see what Sin deserves : We will see that the terrible Punishment we have been discouraging of, is *nothing too severe*. If we consider Man with respect to the Creatures that are under him, the inanimate Part of the Creation, and the Brutes ; he was appointed to be their Mouth, by which they should pay Homage to their Creator ; he was to be their Treasurer, to pay in a Revenue of Glory for them to their Creator and Governor : But Man by Sin puts him-

himself out of all Capacity for this; he lays an *ill Example* before his Fellow Creatures. But all this is nothing when compared with the *Injury* he doth to GOD by every Sin. This, if throughly and well understood, would for ever clear the Justice of GOD, in punishing Sin with *eternal Punishment*. True it is indeed what *Elihu* says, *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy Transgressions be multiplied what dost thou unto him?* Job xxxv. 6. That is to say, GOD lies beyond our *Reach*; we cannot by our Sins *detract* from, as neither can we by our Holiness *add* to his *Happiness*: But this is no Proof that we do him no Injury. A Rebel clapt up in Prison, or in the Hand of the King's Guards, is not able to reach the Prince's Person, nor render him dissatisfied; yet he may then injure him, and doth it, when he *unjustly* reflects upon his Government. Just so is it with Sinners: Indeed they cannot scale the Walls of Heaven, they are not able to climb over the eternal Ramparts, which raise the Fence of the Almighty's sacred Throne, and there stab his Person; but yet they injure him in his Name and Honour, and even in his Life, by every Sin: 'Tis *intended Murder*; and this is Death by the Laws of GOD and Man. That among Men 'tis not always punished so, is only because 'tis not always discovered; for when 'tis discovered by Words, or *overt*, tho' *ineffectual*, *Actions*, 'tis punished. Every Sin *spits* upon GOD's Holiness, *tramples* upon his Authority, *brands* his Wisdom with Folly, *denies* his Goodness, and *braves*, and gives a *Defiance* to his Power

Power: What Punishment then can be *too great* for this? Now sure, (3.) Sin deserves it, if we consider the *Obligations that are by every Sin trampled upon*. Every one will own that the Sins of Children against their Parents, of Servants against their Masters, of Subjects against their Lord, and the Wives against their Husbands, are Sins of a black Hue, a crimson Dy, and deserve therefore a very severe Punishment; and accordingly are so punished in all Nations: But all these Obligations are *none* to what we all ly under to GOD; so that there's more *Perfidy, Falshood, and Treachery* in all our Sins against GOD, than in any of these: Therefore, 'tis but just that there should be a *Proportion* kept betwixt the *Offences* and the *Punishment*.

4. That Sin deserves such a Punishment, is the *Judgment of GOD*; and we know that his Judgment is always according to *Truth*. 'Tis not the mistaken Notion of a Man, who in the most momentuous Truths may trip; but 'tis the Judgment of the only wise GOD, who is a God of Knowledge, by whom Actions are *weighed*. I think we need not go so far back at present for a Proof of this as the *penal Sanction* of the Law, so long as we have the *Death of Christ*, as an Evidence of it, nearer hand. If an infinite Person, standing in the Sinner's Room, must, for his Sins, have such a Load of Wrath laid upon him, what less must the Punishment of the Sinner himself be than eternal Wrath? None can pretend to believe the Truth of the Gospel, and question the Justice of God in punishing Sinners *eternally*; for is it not ridiculous

lous to admire *divine Severity* in the eternal Punishment of wicked Men, and not to attend to infinite Justice punishing severely his own beloved Son? What Wonder is it that wicked Men should be for ever tormented for their own Sins, if the most righteous Son of God suffered for the Sins of others? He that without a Reproach to his Goodness, could endure his most dear Son to suffer so long as one Hour, will much better endure unjust Sinners to be tormented with eternal Punishment.

5. That Sin deserves such a Punishment, is not only the Judgment of God, but of Men too. The common Reason of Mankind speaks its Justice. This appears by the Sentiments the Heathens had of this Matter. They had not a Revelation to guide them, and therefore had wild Fancies about the Manner of these Punishments, which they judg'd eternal: But that there were such Punishments, and that they were just, they had no doubt. Hence it was that their Poets did condemn *Tantalus* to such a Place, where he should have Rivers just washing up to his Lip, and yet should not be able to drink of them; and so remain eternally under the Violence of Thirst, with this gnawing Aggravation, That he had Waters just at his very Lip. But we may yet have a more clear Proof of the Judgments of Men in all Nations, in their Sanctions of human Laws. Do not all of them for Crimes, condemn to *perpetual Imprisonment*, or to *Death*? The one is an eternal Punishment of *Loss of Life*, and all its concomitant Advantages; and this Punishment is inflicted without

without respect to a future Life ; as appears in this, That such Laws are execute upon them, of whom none has Reason to think that they shall have any Share in the Advantages of a future Life. And that perpetual Imprisonment, is not eternal Imprisonment, is not because that tis thought unjust, but because neither the Law-makers, who put it in Execution, nor they who break it, live to Eternity.

6. That Sin deserves eternal Punishment, appears from the *Acknowledgment* of the Punished. This is a very strong Argument ; for altho' they who are yet wallowing in their Sins, and are lull'd fast asleep in the Lap of carnal Security, will not acknowledge so much : Yet if we enquire at these whom GOD has awakened, and to whom he has given a Discovery of the *exceeding Sinfulness of their Sin*, whether with a Prospect of Mercy or not, they will all with one Mouth acknowledge that *Sin deserves eternal Wrath*. These whom the Lord deals with, in order to their Conversion, will all subscribe to the *Justice* of GOD, should he *damn them eternally*. I do not say that they will be *content* to be damned ; but they will *own* that GOD were most just should he deal so by them. And not only is it so with them, but even with these who are sunk to the utmost in black Despair. If we listen to a *Sinner*, who has laid aside all Hopes of Mercy, we shall hear him crying out in the Anguish of his Soul one Day, *I am sealed up to eternal Wrath : I tell you I deserve it ; my own Conscience condemns me, what needeth any other Judge ?* and another Day again we may hear him

him crying out, *Tho' there were not another damned, yet GOD is just in making me an Example to others; and I cannot justly complain. There is no Punishment so great but I have justly deserved it.* These Considerations do sufficiently evince, that Sin deserves eternal Punishment; and therefore GOD has good Reason to demand it.

2. Our great Lord and Master has great Reason to punish you with such a Punishment, not only because your *Offences deserve it*, but because *he, in the Institution and Promulgation of his Laws, did actually declare that he would so punish the Transgressors of it.* Sin and eternal Punishment were then linked together. With that same very Breath that GOD said to *Adam*, *Thou shalt keep my Commandments; he also said to him, In the Day thou breakest them, thou shalt surely die.* That the Annihilation of his Soul should be there intended, is contrary to Scripture, and has no Ground in Reason; and if only temporal Death is meant, then this would be implied, *to say, thou shalt be rewarded with eternal Life if thou sin*, which were ridiculous to imagine. That therefore which is intended is certainly *eternal Death*. And GOD having annexed this Penalty to the Violation of his Law, there is great Reason that it should be punctually executed. For

1. *The Honour of his Wisdom* requires it. To what purpose should this Penalty be annexed, if it were not on Design that it should be put in Execution? or at least it would reflect upon his Wisdom, if it might not with great Reason be put in Execution.

2. *Justice*

2. *Justice to his Honour*, as he is *righteous Judge of the Earth*, calls for the Execution of this Law. What, I pray, is the Business of one placed in that high Station, if not to see Laws executed, to see the Compliers with them rewarded, and the Offenders *condignly punished*?

3. *Justice to the Law* requires the Punishment of Sinners: For if the Law in one Part may be neglected, why not in all? The Threatning, as well as the Precept has upon it the *Impress* of the supreme Authority; and therefore, as by the Violation of the Precept, so by the Non-execution of the Penalty, the *Honour* of the Law *suffers*. If the Penalty be required, then the Honour of the Precept is *repaired*; but if the Penalty be neglected, then the Law is entirely affronted, and there is no Reparation, than which there can be nothing more unreasonable.

4. *Justice to Onlookers*. To neglect the Punishment of Offenders, is of dangerous Influence to Beholders; it betrays them into one of two or three dangerous Mistakes; it has a tendency either to make them entertain *light Apprehensions* of Sin; or else to make them *call in question* either the *Knowledge, Power or Wisdom* of GOD, and his *Zeal* for his own Glory: Therefore Justice to them requires that the penal Sanction of the Law be vigorously put in Execution.

5. *Justice to GOD's Faithfulness*. The Honour of the divine Veracity requires it. GOD engaged his faithful Word for the Accomplishment of the Threatning; therefore either the

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Truth

Truth of GOD must ly open to *Suspicion*, or else the Punishment must be inflicted upon you.

(6.) To add no more Considerations under this Head; by *annexing ete nal Punishment* to the Commission of Sin, all the divine Attributes were engaged to *see it execute*, of the Justice, Wisdom, and Sovereignty of GOD, it has already been made appear; and it might with equal Facility be evinced, as to the Unchangeableness of GOD, his Goodness, Power and Knowledge; therefore he has Reason to demand so high a Satisfaction.

3. Sin not only deserves that heavy and eternal Punishment we have been discoursing of, and not only has GOD adjudged, by an irreversible Appointment, that it should be so punished; but we say moreover, That GOD *has just Reason to inflict it*, because this Appointment of GOD, linking Sin and Punishment together, is *most just and equal*. This puts it beyond all rational Doubt, that GOD has reason to treat you as he will do. Now, the *Justice* of this *penal Sanction*, I shall open to you in several Considerations. And

(1.) This is plain from that which we have at great Length discoursed of already, in reference to the *Demerit* of Sin: We have prov'd, by many incontrollable Evidences that Sin *deserves the highest Punishment* that he can inflict. Now, just Authority can never be but just, in punishing a Crime, or annexing a Penalty to it, that's proportioned to its own Nature; and this is plainly the Case here.

2. GOD has made this Sanction ; therefore it is just. This I think needs no Proof, the Judge of all the Earth cannot do wrong, he is a GOD of Truth, and without Iniquity. Our Ways may be unequal, his can never be so ; For were GOD unrighteous, how could he then judge the World, says the Apostle, Rom. iii. 6. His Will is the Measure of Justice to us. He doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth ; and none can say to him, What dost thou ? Dan. iv. 35. If once we quite the Will of GOD for the Standard and Measure of Justice, then we wander and lose our selves, and are never like to find any other Thing that can with any Shadow of Reason pretend to the Place.

(3.) This Appointment of God is most just, because it was made in way of a Contract. There was a Covenant between GOD and Adam. God did propose the whole Matter to him ; and the Substance of it was this, *Do, and live, sin, and die.* Man was content, and that upon Deliberation, with the Terms ; and therefore the Justice of God is clear in this Matter.

(4.) GOD did warn Man beforehand of this Punishment ; and therefore he is very just in the Matter : Which will appear very considerable, if we observe that, as Man is unquestionably obliged to obey God, so God has an unquestionable Right to command ; and that not only upon account of his supereminent Excellency, but on account of his Creation, Preservation, and innumerable Benefits ; therefore he commanding to Man what is just and equal,

may do it upon what Penalty he pleases, without any Shadow of Injustice ; as I shall make appear by this plain and familiar Instance. I suppose the Lord of a Mannor to have placed or made a Precipice in some Part of his Land, and that he forbids his Servant to go there, and tells him if he do, he will be sure to fall there and be kill'd. Who would say that he were guilty of that Servant's Death, if the Servant should go there ? And, I say, GOD can with as little Justice be charged with the Death of Sinners, or with Severity, since he gives them fair Warning. They choose Damnation, and their Destruction is of themselves. This was perfectly the Case of Man at first : And that afterwards he fell under a fatal Inability to abstain from Sin, no more clears him, or makes GOD faulty, than it would clear the Servant formerly mentioned, for make his Matter blameworthy, if the Way to that Precipice lay stooping downward, and the Servant should, upon the Beginning of the Descent, run with so full a Carreer, that he were not able to halt till he had broke his Neck. This I suppose would not reflect upon the Master, that he did not remove the Precipice, or alter the Way ; and this is the Case between GOD and Man.

5. Consider the Influence that this penal Sanction has upon them that are saved ; and wherein we may see that GOD was most just in appointing it. 'Tis the Means to bring them to Heaven. It moves Ministers to preach, *Knowing the Terrors of the LORD, we perswade Men,* 1 Cor.

v. 11 And it moves the Hearers to accept of Salvation; as appears from the frequent Use our LORD makes of this Argument. And in the original Constitution of the Law, 'twas design'd as a Mean, not only for the *Reparation* of its violated Honour, but also to *deter* Men from breaking the Law: Therefore GOD is most just in the Whole of his Conduct in this Matter; since the greater the Penalty was, the more likely a Mean it was to hold Men in the Way.

6. I thought to have further cleared the Equity of this Appointment of GOD, whereby Sin is ordained thus to be punished, from the Consideration of the *Necessity thereof in order to the Government of the World*. If Men have yet such Boldness to sin, notwithstanding the *Severity of these Punishments*, what would they have done, if there had been only some light temporary *Punishment* to be inflicted? This Consideration would lead me too far from the Subject in Hand; therefore I but name it, and proceed to the

VI. *And last General*, which I proposed for the Improvement of this *Doctrine*. I have unfolded, at some length, the *Crime charged* upon you: I have prov'd, both in *general* and in *particular*, that ye *have all sinned*, and thereby *come short of the Glory of GOD*. I have shewed what the *Satisfaction* is which Justice requires: I have likewise made appear, and have given you some Account, how *reasonable* it is that Justice should carry its Demands so high. It remains now, that we shortly represent your

Misery from the Whole. But here indeed I am at a Loss how to *begin*; and if once I begin, shall find my self at no less a Strait where to *end*. *Sinners* I have prov'd you; and *miserable* I shall now endeavour to represent ycu upon this Account.

1. If a *vast Loss* can make you miserable, then indeed ye shall be so. Your Loss can be imagined by none, but these who enjoy the Advantages you lose, or these who are already in the Place of Torment, and have their Eyes opened to see their own Condition. 'Tis such a Loss, that you cannot from one Place have a full *Prospect* of it, I mean, of that little Portion of it which may be known without feeling: And therefore we shall give you some different Views of it, as it were from distinct Places, at each of which ye may see some, and but some small Part of it.

(1.) I say your Loss shall be great, for ye shall *lose the World* with all its Delights, Comforts and Satisfactions. Are ye now posselt of a *competent Estate*, a *flourishing Family*, *Health of Body*, *Content of Mind*, and a *fair Stock of Reputation*? ye shall lose all these Things: And will not this be a *vast Loss* to you? Are not these the Things that *bound* your Desires, and terminate all your Wishes and Enquiries? I fear they are so to most of you. They who have their Portion only in this Life, seek no more but these Things. All the Question with such is, *Who will shew us any Good*, any *worldly Good*? And if they lose these Things, then indeed they lose all. They may say their Gods are taken away

away, and what have they more? Whatever is desirable to the Eyes, or pleasant to any of your Senses, ye shall at once for ever and eternally be deprived of. And is not this a *vast Loss*? Since it must be so, in many of your Eyes, ye shall lose that which ye valued above Heaven and *Christ*. It may be some of you cleave so fast to a present World, that neither the Promises, nor the Threats of the Gospel can induce you to quite your Hold; yet notwithstanding of all your Endeavour to keep them, ye shall lose them all. Death will part you and them: And O how great will this Loss be to you who have no more!

(2.) When GOD punishes you, ye will sustain *the Loss of the Gospel* which now ye enjoy. And this will appear to be a vast Loss then. The Gospel has in it *Treasures* for the Poor, Eyes for the Blind, Feet for the Lame, *Understanding* for the Simple, *Peace* for Rebels, *Pardons* for condemned Malefactors, a *Title to Heaven* for the Heirs of Hell, *Life* for the Dead, *Happiness* for the Miserable: And to lose all these, what Loss can be comparable to this? This Loss, when 'tis now spoken of, may appear small to you: But the Day is coming, when ye will learn to put a high Value upon it, after ye have lost it.

(3.) Ye will sustain a vast Loss; for infallibly ye lose *Heaven*, if ye continue in your Sins: And who can tell what a Loss that is? Who can sound the Depth of these *Rivers of Pleasure* that are at GOD's right Hand for evermore? Who can weigh that far more exceeding and eter-

nal Weight of Glory? Who can take the Dimensions of that vast *Inheritance of the Saints in Light?* Who can declare the Sweetness of the *Fruits of that Paradise of Pleasure?* What Eye can discern, or let in just Apprehensions of that Blessing Sight which the Saints enjoy above, where there are no Clouds to obscure the Face of their Sky? Well, what ever there is of these Things, all these ye lose. O immense Loss indeed!

We only name these Things, designing now to hasten to another Subject. Would ye know how great a Loss ye sustain in the first Instance mentioned? We may send you to those who are wallowing in the Delights of the Sons of Men, and who are glutting themselves with a present World. They will tell you strange Things of your Loss by the Removal of *worldly Comforts*. If ye would understand how great your Loss is, by the Removal of the Gospel; go to these who have got a Heart to embrace it, and they will give you a surprising Account of their *Enjoyments* by it: But who can tell what Heaven is? they only who have been there; and even scarce they, for surely they feel, they enjoy more than can be express'd. Now all these Things ye lose: But need I say more? Ye lose GOD, ye lose your own Souls; and if ye lose your own Souls, and gain a World, what Profit have ye? yea, ye sustain a vast Loss; what must then your Loss be, when ye not only lose your own Souls, but lose with it all that's in *this World*,
all

all that's good and comfortable in that *which is to come*?

2. As ye sustain a great Loss, so ye must suffer a *vast Torment*. The former Particular, *viz.* the Punishment of Loss, I did only touch at, because I had Occasion in the doctrinal Part to discourse a little of it: But here, when I come to speak of the Punishment of *Sense*, I shall be a little more large, yet so as not to exceed the Bounds of this Day's Discourse. O Sinners, *miserable* are ye, if *huge, vast and intolerable* Torment can make you *so*. A View of your Misery upon this Account, I shall give you in a very few Particulars.

1. If ye would understand what your Case is eternally to be, ye must consider *what of you* it is that is to be eternally *tormented*: Our LORD tells us of both Soul and Body's being destroyed in Hell. *Matth. x. 28. Fear not them that kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* And this gives us to understand what is to be the Subject of these Torments Sinners are to sustain. 'Tis not a Finger or a Toe; 'tis not a *Tooth* or a *Joynt*; no, but 'tis the *whole Man*, Soul and Body, that are to be tormented. And how will ye be able to endure this? If a Drop of scalding Water fall upon your Hand, ye are ready to cry out of intolerable Pain: But how will ye then bear it, when a full Shower of Brimstone, a Deluge of burning Wrath, will fall upon the whole Man? Ye are not now able to hold your Finger to the Fire; how will ye then endure

dure, when Soul and Body shall be cast *alive* into devouring Fire and everlasting Burnings? If now the Trouble of one Part of the Body occasion so terrible Disorder, what will your Case be, when every *Faculty* of your Souls, every *Member*, every Joint, Sinew and Artery of your Body, shall be *brim-full* of Wrath?

(2.) Consider, *Who is the Contriver of these Torments*. There have been some very exquisite Torments contrived by the Wit of Men, the naming of which, if ye understood their Nature, were enough to fill your Hearts with Horror; but all these fall as far short of the Torments ye are to endure, as the Wisdom of Man falls short of that of GOD, who is *wise, and will bring evil*, *Isa. xxxi. 2*. Infinite Wisdom has contrived that Evil, these *Torments* which are to be the eternal Portion of all impenitent Sinners. If Man can find out a Rack, a Gridiron, a Furnace heated seven times, for tormenting such as he has a Mind to punish; what shall we conceive to be the *Inventions* of infinite Wisdom, when 'tis *set on Work* to contrive a Punishment for Sinners? • Wisdom, infinite Wisdom, well knows the Frame, both of Soul and Body; it knows what Faculty of the one or the other, are of most exquisite Sense, and what Torments can work upon them. GOD shews himself wise, not only in bringing Evil upon Sinners, but in contriving it, so that it shall surpass what Creatures can inflict.

3. Consider, *Who is the Inflicter of these Torments*, and this will give us a strange Prospect of the Misery of those who fall under them.

'Tis

'Tis *GOD*, by his own *immediate Hand*. And from this the *Apostle* represents the Misery of such who shall fall under this Punishment, *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, and I will recompense, saith the LORD: And again, the LORD shall judge his People. It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living GOD, Heb. x. 30, 31.* Should *GOD* but give a Commission to some *Creature* to torment us, if it were but to a Flea to leap into the Eye, and there to abide, how great would this Torment be? But much more terrible would your Case be, if *GOD* should set his Wisdom a work, to find out and invent what *Mixture* of Torments from *Creatures* would be most exquisite, and then inflict these upon you; this could not but make your Case miserable: Since the Nature of Man is capable to receive Comfort or Disquietment from every *Creature*; and *GOD* knows not only our Frame and Make, but that of all the other *Creatures*, and therefore understands what might contribute most to our Disquiet and Torment; should *GOD* deal thus, it would make very exquisite *Torments* indeed, but all this were nothing to his own *immediate Hand* and *Power*. His little Finger is more terrible than the joint Power of all the *Creatures*. As there is no searching out of his Understanding, so there is no searching out of his Power, who is the *Inflicter*, the *Author* of the eternal Torment of Sinners, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the *LORD*, and from the Glory of his Power, 2 *Thess.* i. 9. But of this more anon.

(4.) Con-

4. Consider what it is that engages infinite Power, and sets on infinite Wisdom, and this will give you yet a more terrible Representation of your Misery. If it were only Justice, ye might expect that there might possibly be some Abatement made; but 'tis Anger, Fury, the Height of Fury, that sets Wisdom a work to contrive, and Power on work to work your Misery; and therefore miserable ye must of Necessity be, beyond Thought or Expression. A remarkable Scripture to this Purpose we have in *Nahum i. 2--6.* GOD is jealous, and the LORD revengeth, the LORD revengeth, and is furious, the LORD will take Vengeance on his Adversaries, and he reserveth Wrath for his Enemies. The LORD is slow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The LORD hath his Way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the Dust of his Feet. He rebuketh the Sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the Rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the Flower of Lebanon languisheth. The Mountains quake at him, and the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his Presence; yea, the World, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his Indignation? and who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him. This is a Scripture so very remarkable, that we cannot pass it, without offering you a few Observations for clearing it a little. And (1.) Here ye may see the Certainty of Sinners being punished. If ever ye escape who continue in your Sins, it must either be because GOD will not, or because he is not able to punish you: But here

here ye see that he is both able and willing,
*Verse 2. The Lord is great in Power, and will not
 at all acquit the Wicked.* By no Means will he
 let them go who continue in their Impenitency.
 (2.) Ye see what the Punishment of the Wicked
 is: *He will take Vengeance on his Adversaries and
 he reserveth Wrath for his Enemies.* 'Tis express'd
 by *Vengeance* and by *Wrath*. 'Tis a Punish-
 ment that's the Effect of Wrath and Revenge,
 and is to be continued by Wrath that's kept in
Reserve for that Purpose. (3.) Ye have that
 which is the *Inflicter* of this Punishment; 'tis
 the great *Power of God*. (4.) Here ye have that
 which sets this Power on Work to punish the
 Wicked; 'tis *Jealousie*: *Now Jealousie is the Rage
 of a Man, Prov. vi. and last, and Jealousie in
 God is the Rage of God.* (5.) Here you see the
 ruful Effects of this Rage of God; *the Lord reveng-
 eth, the Lord revengeth.* The Expressions being doub-
 led intends the Signification, and shews the Cer-
 tainty of it. (6.) To represent, if possible, the
 Terribleness of this Revenge, in a yet more
 lively Manner, 'tis added, *the Lord revengeth, and
 is furious.* (7.) The Terribleness of this Ap-
 pearance of GOD against Sinners, is further de-
 clared by a *Description* of GOD's Power, describ-
 ed in its *Effects* upon the inanimate Creatures:
 As if he had said, Look how terrible the Case
 of Sinners is like to be, when GOD begins to
 take Vengeance on them, and to revenge him-
 self by that Power, which by a Rebuke drieth
 up the Sea and the Rivers, that makes *Bashan*
 and *Carmel* to languish, that melts the Hills,
 and makes the Earth to quake. The Power
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of GOD was put forth in a very remarkable Manner, in creating the World; but 'tis exerted in a more remarkable Manner, in punishing the Wicked: Herein is his Power, even the Glory of his Power manifested, for ye are to be punished *with everlasting Destruction from the Glory of his Power.* The Power of Man produces greater Effects, when Anger and Fury make him *strain*, as it were, every Sinew and Nerve, than when he is cool, and in a sedate composed Frame: A *Samson* in such a Case pull'd down the Pillars of the House. What shall we then conceive shall be the Effects of GOD's Power, when the Heat of Anger and *fierce Indignation* and Fury excites and acts it? May I not conclude this Consideration with that of the Prophet in the 6 Verse, *Who can stand before his Indignation, and who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him.*

3. As your Loss is great, and the *Punishment* ye are to undergo great, so both these will come upon you in one Day: And this is a terrible Aggravation of your Misery. In a *Moment* all the Enjoyments of Earth, all the Gospel Privileges, and all the Hopes of future Bliss which impenitent Sinners have, will vanish; and then, even then, at that very Instant, will GOD appear, with his Face full of Frowns, his Heart full of Fury, his Hand full of Power, and all directed toward Sinners. It is remarkable in the Sentence at the last Day, that with the same Breath, at the very same Instant, they are

are bid *depart God's Presence*, Matth. xxv. 41. they are likewise *sent into everlasting Burnings*.

4. As both will come at *once*, so they both will come *suddenly* and *surprisingly*. This extremely increases your Misery. Sudden Destruction, and surprising Destruction, is, on that very Account, *double Destruction*. It may be said that your Damnation *lingreth not*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. As *Christ comes quickly*, Rev. xxii. 20. so he comes in *flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that know not GOD, and obey not the Gospel*. 2 Thess. i. 8. 'Tis *sudden*, because it comes at a Time when 'tis not expected. Many of you possibly may be putting the evil Day far away; and yet ye cannot tell how near it may be to some of you. Who can tell, but some who this Day are *here in GOD's Presence*, may be in the *Pit before the next Sabbath*? But whether it be so or not, we are sure 'tis not long to the Time, when all of you who remain impenitent, shall be sent down to the Sides of the Pit. 'Tis sudden also, because usually this Ruin comes when the quite contrary is expected; when *they say Peace, Peace, then sudden Destruction*, Thess. v. 3. When the Fool was singing a *Requiem* to his own Soul for many Years, then that *very Night* all this Misery comes upon him, Luke xii. 20. And this was a great Aggravation of his Misery. A Blow given when the contrary is expected, is doubly stunning.

5. As all these Things, all the Losses, all the Torments we have been speaking of, come suddenly and at *once*; so they are all *inevitable*. Impenitent Sinners cannot by any Means escape them. For

I. GOD

1. GOD has engaged that Sinners shall be punished. He will not at all acquit the Wicked. He has past his Word upon it, he swears in his Wrath that impenitent Sinners shall not enter into his Rest, Heb. iii. 18. Therefore they may expect that he will be as good as his Word.

2. GOD cannot change: There is no Variableness nor Shadow of Turning with him, Jam. i. 17. He continues unalterably the same. *I am the LORD, I change not, therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed, Mal. iii. 6.* There's the clear Side of the Cloud to his own People; and upon the other Hand, it may be infer'd, *I am the LORD, I change not*; therefore ye who have continued impenitent shall be turned into Hell.

3. Ye are not able to ward off the Blow. The Apostle observes, *That the Foolishness of God is wiser than Man, and the Weakness of God is stronger than Man, 1 Cor. i. 25.* The weakest Effort of GOD against Man, is enough utterly to ruine him. Lo, at at the Rebuke of his Countenance we perish, Psal. lxxx. 16. He can look upon one that is proud, and abase him, and his Eye can cast about Rage and Destruction, Job xl. 11, 12, 13. If a Lock can ruine us, much more the Breath of his Nostrils: *By the Breath of his Nostrils we are consumed, and by the Blast of him we perish, Job iv. 9.* Now, if ye be not able to stand against his Look, his Breath, the Blast of his Nostrils, far less against his Finger, which ruined Egypt by divers Plagues; and yet much less against his Fist, Ezek. xxii. 13. Whose Heart can endure? Whose Hands can be strong, in the Day when these Hands that measure the Waters in the Hol-

Hollow of them, that span the Heavens, comprehend the Dust of the Earth, and take up the Isles as, a very little Thing, shall begin to crush, and squeeze, and grip him? far less is any able to withstand, when GOD lays on the Weight of his Wrath, which presseth them hard, as it did *Heman*; or when he runs upon them like a mighty Giant, with his full Force, as a Man doth upon his Enemy, *Job* xvi. 14. In this Case, neither ye your selves nor any Creature can help you; therefore your *Misery is inevitable*.

6. As your Misery is *inevitable*, so 'tis *eternal*. 'Tis not for a *Day*, or a *Year*, or a *Month*, or an *Age*, nay, nor for *Millions* of Ages; but for *ever*. 'Tis everlasting Destruction, everlasting Burnings ye are to dwell with; the Worm dies not, the Fire goeth not out; the Smoke of your Torment shall ascend for ever and ever. If one *ever* will not do it, ye shall have more of them. Here indeed is *Misery*, exquisite Misery; and ye would do well to think on your Escape.

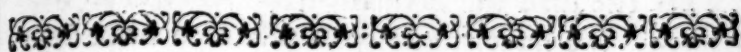
We have now, for Eight LORD's Days, insisted upon this Subject: And may we not conclude with the Prophet, *Who hath believed our Report*? Who among you all, who have been our close Hearers upon this Subject, are yet convinced of Sin? I fear very few, if any. If there be but *one Soul* among you all that's awaken'd to see its Sin and Misery, the News we are next to bring, will be welcome to *such*, and we hope the LORD will grant them that which they long for.

M

But

But to the *Generality*, who are yet fast asleep, and who are as insensible as ever, we shall say a few Words: And (1.) we say to you, Have ye not heard what we have *charg'd* you with? And what *answer* ye to all? I am sure ye can answer nothing that's of Weight. And if ye be not able to answer a Man like your selves, think how mute ye will be, when ye come before our great LORD and Master, seated upon the great white Throne. (2.) *What mean ye, O Sleepers?* Is it now Time to be sleeping, when ye cannot tell but the next Moment ye shall sink irrecoverably into the immense Ocean of the eternal and intolerable Wrath of GOD? (3.) We cannot tell but this your *Stupidity* may provoke GOD to that Degree against you, that ye shall never have a Warning more. How terrible will your Case be, if he shall say, *Never Fruit grow upon these barren and unfruitful Sinners any more*; or if this Day he shall give Death a Commission, Go to yonder obstinate Sinners, whom I by my Servants have long been dealing with, in order to bring them to a Conviction of their Danger, *arrest* them, bring them immediately to me, and I shall awaken them, but not to their Advantage. How will your Hearts ache, your Ears tingle, and your Spirits fail, when ye hear the dreadful Sentence pronounced, *Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels?* Now, if ye would evade this, awake in Time, and flee to *Jesus Christ*. Hasten your Escape, *before the Decree bring forth, before the Day pass as the Chaff, before the fierce An-*

ger of the LORD come upon you, before the Day of the LORD's Anger come upon you.



MAN's Recovery

B Y

Faith in CHRIST;

O R,

The convinced Sinner's Case and Cure.

PART II.

ACTS xvi. 29.

*Then he called for a Light, and sprang in;
and fell down before Paul and Silas.*

30 *And brought them out, and said, Sirs,
what must I do to be saved?*

31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord
Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,
and thy House.*

WHEN we began to discourse to you from Rom. iii. 23. we observ'd, that there are Three Questions in which Man is principally concern'd, *What have I done? What shall I do to be saved? What shall I render to the LORD?* He who knows how

to answer these *satisfyingly*, cannot miss Happiness, if he practise *according to Knowledge*.

To the *First* we have return'd Answer at some length. We have shewn you what ye have done, and what are the Consequents of it; ye *have sinn'd*, and so *come short of the Glory of GOD*. Now we shall proceed to the second Question, *What shall we do to be saved?* And as the Ground of what we are to say upon this Head, we have chosen the *Words* read, in which both the Question and Answer are distinctly laid down.

In the *Text* and *Context*, we have the Account of the Conversion of the Keeper of the Prison at *Philippi*, a City in *Macedonia*. In which there occur several Things very considerable.

1. *The Person* who was converted deserves to have a special Remark put upon him. He is a *Heathen*, one of the ruder Sort, who was taught *blindly* to obey what he was put to, without ever enquiring whether *right* or *wrong*. He had, but the Night before, put the Apostles Feet in the Stocks, and laid them in Chains. When GOD designs to erect *Trophies* to his Grace, he is not wont to single out the *moral*, the *wise* and *polisht* Sort of Sinners, lest they should glory in themselves: But he pitches upon a *Mary Magdalen* that has seven Devils dwelling in her; a persecuting *Saul*, a rude *Taylor*, that no Flesh may glory in his Presence, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28, 29.

2. *The Place* where he is converted, is a *Prison*, a Place where Ministers were not wont to come, but when they were brought there, that they might be kept from endeavouring the Conversion of Sinners. When GOD has a Mind to have

have a Sinner, he will not want Means to accomplish his Design. He can make a Place, that's design'd to be a *Mean of suppressing* the Gospel, *subservient* to its Propagation.

3. The *Exercise of the Apostles* under their Confinement, deserves a Remark. A *Prison* is not able to keep them from *praising GOD*. Sometimes they have been made to sing in a *Prison*, who have been mourning when at *Liberty*. GOD dispenses the largest, the richest Comforts, when his People need them most. He can sweeten a stinking Dungeon with the Savour of his sweet Ointments. He can soften hard Chains, by lining them, as it were, with rich Supplies of Grace. He can relax the Closeness of a *Prison*, with his free *Spirit*, who brings Liberty wherever he is. Their Hearts are thankful for Mercies that they enjoy; and GOD chooses that Time to give them new ones: A strong Proof that it is indeed a good Thing to give Thanks unto the Name of the LORD. Praise for old Mercies brings new Mercy with it. The liberal Man lives by liberal Devices.

4. The *Occasion* of the Jaylor's Conversion is an *Earthquake* which shook the *Prison*, opened the Doors, and made the Chains fall off. A strange Sort of *Earthquake* indeed, that loosed the Prisoners Bonds. When the LORD designs to awaken a Sinner, if *less* will not do it, a *Miracle* shall be wrought.

5. It is worthy our Observation, that the *first Influence* of this Providence was like to have proven fatal and ruining to the Man whose Salvation was designed. The first Appearances of

GOD for the Salvation of Sinners may have a very *strange Influence*. They may be so far from bringing the Sinners, whose Salvation is design'd, *nearer*, that they may seem to put them *further off*. The Jaylor would have *kill'd* himself.

6. Their *Frame and Deportment* under this Dispensation is no less remarkable. Tho' the Earth be *shaken*, their Hearts are not so, but are in a blessed *Rest and Repose*. They know that GOD who shook the Earth, was their GOD, and gave it a Commission not to *wrong*, but to *help* them. This keeps the Christian calm under shaking Providences; The Seas may rage, and beat high, but the Rock whereon he rests, remains firm, and cannot be shaken. And a further Proof of their Frame we have in their Regard to the Jaylor's Safety. Some would have thought it a happy Occasion to make an Escape; but they take Care of the Keeper's Life, tho' it should be to the endangering of their own. They *do Good* to Enemies, and *love* them that hate them.

7. Their *Words to the Jaylor* are remarkable; *Do thy self no Harm*, they seasonably step in for preventing of Sin. They represent the Sin so as it might appear the more *hateful*; they remove the Temptation. Herein they leave us an Example: If we would prevent the Ruines of others, we must step in *seasonably*. Had they delayed a little longer, the Man had been gone past all Remedy. If we would discover Sin so as to make it appear sinful, we must represent it under these Forms which are most likely to engage Sinners to renounce it. *Do thy self no Harm*. Self-preservation is the prime Dictate of Nature.

For

For one to destroy himself, is to act cross to the very Foundation of Reason, which leads to the Use of all Means that have a Tendency to Self-preservation. And then, they remove the Temptation. These who would effectually dissuade Sinners from Sin, must let them see that all the Grounds they go upon are Mistakes. The Man suppos'd they had been gone, and that he would be punished for them; and to evite this imaginary Danger, he would have really ruin'd himself. Thus Sinners, to evite *imaginary Evils*, run upon *real ones*; and to gain imaginary Advantages, they lose the true Gain. And therefore Ministers or others, in dealing with them, should study to undeceive them in this Matter; *Do thy self no Harm, for we are all here.*

Here some may enquire, How they saw him, when it was now Night, and he did not see them? To this I answer, There might be either Moon-light, or a Candle in the uttermost Room, whereby they might see what was done there; but yet he could not see into the remote Corners of the innermost Prison where they lay in Chains.

8. We are to observe the *Influence* that this *Check*, this *seasonable Advice*, that carried a Reproof in its Bosom, had upon the Man; it convinc'd him, it put him into this trembling humble Posture we find him in. Here I might observe many very considerable Truths. Grace usually begins to work, when Sinners have gone to a *Height*, to an *Excess* of Sin. While the Man is practising a bloody Crime, and had murdered himself in *Design*, then Grace chooses to *lay hold*

on him. When *Saul* was grown mad in his Persecution, carrying it even to a foreign Country, Grace takes the *Opportunity*. It doth not bespeak Sinners in their lucid Intervals; but, to shew its Power, it reaches them when at their worst. Again, how mighty a Change can a Word work, when the Spirit of *GOD* concurs? He whom the Earthquake did not deter from sinning, is overcome with a Word: A *Word* makes him that put their Feet in the Stocks, fall down at their Feet. One Word opens the Man's Eyes to see what he never saw before, it fills his Heart with Concern about Salvation, a Thing he had not minded before; and the Fears of that Wrath that he little thought of, when he was just going to throw himself fearlessly in its Hands by Self-murder, now make him tremble, and fall down, and cry out, *What must I do to be saved?* It makes him pay Reverence to them to whom he paid none before. He calls them *Sirs*, a Term of Honour and Respect. A great Change indeed! Here are a Multitude of Wonders. The *Terrors of GOD* make a stout Heart to shake. An unconcern'd Persecutor lays Salvation to Heart: And much Concern in the Heart discovers itself by its Effects; it breaks out in the Trembling of the Body, and the anxious Question in the Text.

9. Here 'tis worth our while to enquire, *What he was convinc'd of?* That the Man is convinc'd of *Danger* is plain; that it was not the Danger of being punished for letting away the Prisoners, is no less plain; he was now eas'd of any Fears he had of this Sort. In one Word, he was convinc'd of his *Sin* and *Misery*. This is plain from the

the *Apostles* Direction. It were Blasphemy to think that they mistook his Case: And the Event puts it beyond all doubt, that they were not mistaken; for the Cure is no sooner applied than it takes Effect. The Direction quieted the Man's Mind; and this makes it plain, that it was Sin and Misery that was now in his *View*; it was the *Curse of the Law* that was pursuing him. We need not spend Time in enquiring what Sins he was convinc'd of. That the Sin of *Self-murder* was the *first*, seems probable from what has been already discours'd. When the Candle of the LORD fills the Bosom of a Sinner with Light, the *first Sin* that's seen is usually some *great Sin*, and for most Part the Sin that was *last committed*. This Sin was just now committed; and a monstrous one it was: But tho' this might be the *First*, we have no Reason to think that it was this *only*; nay, we have Reason to think, that the LORD gave the Man a *broad Sight* of all his other *Impieties*. When the LORD lights a Candle in a Sinner's Bosom, tho' some one *great Sin* occurs *first*, yet he quickly turns to *others*, and *looks through* the ugly Heart that was never seen before, and sees it *full of Sins*. The LORD tells Sinners sometimes all that ever they did, by telling them one Sin; and thus no doubt it was with the Jaylor. In the

10. And *last Place*, the *Posture* the poor Man is in when he puts the melancholy Question, *What must I do to be saved*, deserves our Notice; he is *fallen upon his Face*; not to *worship*: This the *Apostle* would not have permitted, as they did not upon other Occasions: But either 'tis
only

only a *civil Respect* he pays them after the Fashion of Supplicants in the eastern Countries; or his trembling Legs were not able to support his Body; or partly the one, and partly the other occasioned this Posture.

The next Thing that falls under our Consideration, is the *Answer* which the *Apostles* give to the *Taylor's Question*, *Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy House*. This contains the Substance of the Gospel; and it is this Part of the Words we principally design to insist on. I shall refer the Explication of them, till such Time as I have done with what is design'd from the Question; because I do not incline to burden you with too tedious an Explication of the Words.

From the Question itself then, according to the Account just now given of its Meaning, we shall lay before you, and discourse of this one *doctrinal Proposition*.

A Sinner that's awakened and soundly convinced of Sin, and of Misery its necessary Consequent and Companion, will lay Salvation seriously to Heart; or will with Concern put the Question, What must I do to be saved?

This we see is the first Fruit of Conviction in the *Taylor*, *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* This was the immediate Result of Conviction in the awakened Converts, *Acts* ii. 37. And thus it will be with all who are indeed awaken'd and convinc'd of Sin, unless there be some such concomitant Circumstances as hinder it necessarily, of which anon.

In

Part II. *by Faith in Christ.* 171

In discoursing this *Doctrine*, we shall

I. *Premise* a few Things for clearing the *Doctrine*.

II. Enquire what *this Salvation* is, which awakened Sinners seek after.

III. We shall endeavour to give *some Account* of this Concern about *Salvation*, which is the Result of Conviction.

IV. We shall shew *why it is that convinced Sinners do lay Salvation to Heart*. Now, of each of these in Order.

I. We begin with the *First*, and for clearing our *Doctrine*, we offer to your Consideration a few *Propositions*.

1. *Conviction* is that Sight of *Sin* and *Misery* which Sinners get, when the Spirit of GOD presents them to the Soul's View, in their Nature, and their necessary Connection with one another, together with the Sinner's *Interest* and *Concernment* in them; and that in so clear a *Light*, that he cannot but take Notice of them. (1.) We say the Spirit of GOD sets Sin and Misery in their own Nature before the Sinner's Eyes, in a clear *Light*. There is no Man who has not some Apprehensions of Sin and Misery; every one discourses of these Things. Education, the Dispensation of the Word, and Converse have begot some Notions of Sin in every Body's Mind: But for any clear Discoveries of Sin in its Nature, few have them. The Thoughts of Men about Sin, are, for the most part, like the Thoughts of a Man who never saw a Toad with a full Light: If any Man should tell him how loathsome a Creature it were

were; and withal, in the *Twilight* shew him one, when he could not distinguish it from a Piece of curious Jet lying by it, he would not be much affected with the Account, nor would his Thoughts of its Deformity and Ugliness answer the Thing it self: But if the Sun should dart down a Beam of its Light upon the lothsome Creature, the Man would *see it*, and it may be then his Flesh would begin to *shrink*, and it would fill him with *Aversion*. Just so is it with unconvinced Sinners: They *see Sin*, but 'tis only in the Twilight of Reason, Education, or the external Dispensation of the Word; therefore they are not *affected* with it, nor do they see any *peculiar Deformity* in it, until the Spirit of GOD let in a Ray of *supernatural Light*, and then this very quickly fills the Soul with a View of its *exceeding Sinfulness*, which makes the Heart begin to shrink at it, and entertain it with Aversion. The Case is just the same with respect to that Misery that's the Consequent and Companion of Sin. Till once the LORD *make bare his Arm*, in the Sinner's View, and *cast in some Drops of Wrath* into his Soul, with a Certification that these are but Drops, he will never be duly affected with it. (2.) The Spirit of GOD in Conviction not only presents Sin and Misery to the Soul in their *own Nature*, but likewise in their *Connection*. GOD has linked Sin and Hell together. It always *was so*, but Sinners do not always *think so*. Groundless Apprehensions of GOD, as if he were all Mercy, his Patience in forbearing the Execution of such as deserve double Destruction,

on, the subtil Reasonings of Satan, the World and deceitful Lusts, either beget a Perswasion that *Sin* and *Wrath* may be separate, or else a Suspicion that 'tis not certain that they are so *linked together*, as the Word says, and Ministers ~~aver~~. But the Spirit of GOD presents the two in their *Dependence* and *Connection*, in such a Light to the Sinner's Mind, that he cannot but believe that there is no parting them. (3.) The Spirit of GOD discovers to the Sinner how deeply he is concern'd in Sin, and consequently in that *Wo* that's linked to it. He not only lets him see the Toad crawling at a *Distance*, but upon his *very Clothes*. He not only tells him that a certain Man has sinned, as *Nathan* did in the Parable; but applies the Parable, and says, *Thou art the Man*. He not only lets the Sinner see Hell and Sin linked together; but also lets him see the one End of the Chain, Sin, *fastned to himself*: And all this he discovers with such Clearness, as obliges the Sinner to notice it.

2. We premise this, *That there are different Degrees of Conviction*, and that both as to its *Clearness*, *Extent* and *Continuance*. Upon some Persons, some faint Rays break in, and open their Eyes somewhat above Nature's Power, letting them see a little more clearly. Upon others there come in full Beams, discovering all *distinctly*, like the Sun shining in his Strength. Again, some discover only a few; others get under their View *many* Sins: The Light that shines upon some, is only like a *Flash* of Lightning, that fills the House with surprizing Light,
and

and is presently gone again ; or like the warm *Blinks* of the Sun before a Shower, which are presently gone, and the Sky filled with dark Clouds. So various are Convictions, as to their Degrees of Clearness, Extent and Continuance. These Convictions which are only *faint*, and reach only to a few Sins, we are not here speaking of, when we speak of a Sinner that's *thoroughly* awakened or convinced.

3. The *Issues* and *Consequences* of Conviction are no less various. These fainter Discoveries of Sin, which many meet with in the Dispensation of the Word, or by awakening Providences, usually carry People the Length of some faint Desires after Deliverance ; or if they rise higher, it seldom goes further than good *Resolutions*, and there they die. The great *Flashes* of Light, which dart into the Minds of some, very often miscarry, and turn to nothing. 'Tis much with the Persons who fall under them, as 'tis with a Man that's awakened by a Flash of Lightning that darts into his Bed : The Noise of a Thunder-clap that comes along with it, may make the Man start up before he is well awaked ; and the Light unexpectedly discovering many Things, occasions a great Confusion in his Mind ; but presently the Noise is over, and the Light gone, and then the natural Temper of his Body, the Softness and Ease of the Bed he lies in, do invite him afresh to sleep ; and tho' by the Light that came in, he might see the Room full of Enemies, he is easily perswaded that all was but Illusions

of Fancy, and therefore he lays himself down again, and falls fast asleep. Thus it is with many: They hear the Thundrings of the Law in the preaching of the Word, and sometimes the Spirit of GOD lets a *Beam of Light* into the Heart with them, that fills all the Soul with *Fear*, discovering the deadly Foes that are lodged and secretly entertained there; this makes Sinners *start up*, and it may be *cry out*; they are awakned out of their Security, and raise themselves out of their Beds. Now, one would think these Persons in a great *Forwardness*, and *very well*; but ere ever ye are aware, they are fast *asleep* again, *They return with the Dog to the Vomit, and with the Sow that was washed, to the Wallowing in the Mire*, they fall in with their own Sins. Why, what's the Matter? No Degree of *Conviction* can *change* the Heart; and *Convictions* of short Continuance do rather fright than soundly awaken: Therefore when the natural Inclination of the Heart presses on to a little more Sleep, and Satan joyning Issue with this Frame of the carnal Mind, contributes his Part, and endeavours to lay the Soul asleep again, it cannot choose but *fall asleep*; for the Flash of Light is gone, and the Voice of the Minister, or Providence, by the Noise of these Solicitations, are banished his Mind: And here ends the Religion of a great many, who at Communion, and some other Occasions, appear to be something.

4. When we speak of a Person's being *soundly* and *deeply convinced*, and of abiding *Convictions*, we do not mean that there is any *one Degree*

gree of Conviction that all come to, who are saved ; nor do we mean, that there is any Degree of Conviction which is always followed with Faith : For these who are most deeply convinc'd, many one way or other *miscarry* and be lost. They may fall into *Despair*, or they may fall in with false Remedies ; or they may wear out from under Convictions, as some have done, and then turn openly profane. Nor do we intend that every one who believes, before he do so, must ly a long Time under Conviction ; for we see the contrary in the Jaylor, who presently believes and rejoices, and so was very soon out from under his Convictions. In fine, we only speak of deep and sound Conviction, in Opposition to these fainter ones, which seldom raise the Persons that have them above the Sluggard's Desires, or some ineffectual *Resolutions* : And when we speak of abiding Conviction, it is in Opposition to these Flashes, which are presently gone, and have no other Influences than to make half awakened Sinners *start up*, and cry out of their Fears, but presently their Fears are hush'd, and they ly down and fall as *fast asleep* as ever.

5. Our Doctrine must only be understood of those who are yet *in Time* ; for damn'd Sinners are indeed *sufficiently awakened*, yet cannot be said to put this Enquiry, because they are *abundantly convinced*, that Salvation is not to be expected. And the same is to be said as to these who have *split* upon the Rock of Despair, who, tho' they be not yet in Hell, do judge notwithstanding their Escape impossible. Our
 Doctrine

Doctrine is not to be understood of these Persons.

6. We say not in our Doctrine, That Convictions, however deep, or distinct, or abiding, issue in Salvation, but in a *serious Concern* about it. A Person may be concerned, and put Enquiries about that which he may never attain. He may ask, What shall I do to be saved, who shall never be saved. The young Man in the Gospel asked, *What must I do to inherit eternal Life*; yet for any Thing the Scripture makes appear, he did never inherit it. These Things being laid down for clearing the Doctrine, we now proceed to the

II. Thing proposed, which was to enquire, *what that Salvation is*, which awakned Sinners are concerned about, and which they seek after. Salvation, as every one knows, signifies a Delivery from some one Thing or other that's looked upon as *dangerous, evil and hurtful*. None are capable of Salvation, save these who are either under some such Evil, or who are in Danger of it: And then they may be said to be saved, when they are freed from it, or from the Danger of it; when they are delivered from Distresses, or when their Safety is provided for. This is the plain Import of the Word. But as it is used by convinced Sinners, it takes in more: It not only respects *Deliverance* from Evil, but also the *Enjoyment* of GOD and of Good. It is frequently so used in Scripture: Salvation there is put, not only for Deliverance from Hell, but for the Title to Heaven; and hence Believers are stil'd *Heirs* of

of *Salvation*, Heb. i. 14. Where the *Apostle*, speaking of the *Angels* says, *Are they not all ministring Spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation?* In one Word, this *Salvation* that awakened Sinners seek after, takes in *Freedom from Sin*, and a *Title to Life*; and hence the *Question* in the *Text* takes in other two.

1. *What shall I do that I may get Pardon of Sin?* The Sinner sees that 'tis Sin that draws Hell upon him; therefore unless this be pardoned, he despairs utterly of *Freedom from Hell* and *Wrath*. The one he sees impossible to be obtain'd, unless he can first get the other. As Sin draws on Hell; so *Pardon* is linked to *Salvation* from Hell, or rather *Salvation* from *Wrath* is linked to *Pardon*. This we see plainly enough in the Carriage of these convinced Sinners, in that vi. of *Micah* and 6. *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow my self before the high GOD? shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings and Calves of a Year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of Rams, or ten Thousands of Rivers of Oyl? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* This is the genuine Language of a convinced Sinner. *Pardon* he would have at any Rate.

2. The other *Question* that's implied in this, in the *Text*, is that of the young Man that came to Christ, Mark x. 17. *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal Life?* Tho' *Pardon of Sin*, or *Freedom from Wrath*, be that which first occurs to an awakened Sinner, as the Object of his Desires

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fires ; yet 'tis not all that he desires. Salvation would be very incomplete, if *eternal Life* came not in to Boot : For Man might be *forgiven*, and yet be *turned into nothing*, or not admitted into the *Enjoyment* of GOD. A Rebel may be *pardoned*, and yet never be made a *Favourite*. That this, as well as the other, will be much upon the Thoughts of a solidly convinced Sinner, appears from several Considerations.

(1.) When GOD himself condescends to direct such, he makes something more than Pardon necessary to them. *Hos. xiv. 2.* There the Remnant of the *Jews*, whom the LORD has a Mind to do Good to, are told what they must seek from him when they return, and what was necessary in order to their Happiness : Not only must they have their Iniquities pardoned, but they must have gracious *Acceptance* with GOD, or Admission into his Favour. *Take with you Words, and turn to the LORD, say unto him, Take away all Iniquity, and receive us graciously.* Gracious *Acceptance* with GOD, is full as necessary in order to the Content of an awakened Sinner, as *Pardon of Sin*.

(2.) Awakened Sinners in all Ages, have by their Practice evidently discovered, that *Pardon* alone did not seem sufficient to satisfy them. They have ever been seeking after some *Righteousness*, wherein they might appear before GOD, and upon which they might found their Title and Claim to eternal Life, as being sensible that Pardon of Sin alone could not do it. The *Jews*, who expected Pardon from the Mercy of GOD, yet went about to establish a *Righteousness* of
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their own, being ignorant of the Righteousness of GOD,
Rom. x. iii.

(3.) In one Word, a convinced Sinner is one that's perswaded of a future State, and that the Things of this World cannot make him happy : Therefore he certainly means the same by this Question, *What shall I do to be saved ?* That we mean when we enquire, *What shall make us happy.* That every awakened Sinner is convinced of a future State, is unquestionable ; since the Wrath he would so fain be freed from, is chiefly in a future State ; nor is it less plain, that 'tis complete Happiness he aims at, and that all his Trouble arises from the Apprehensions of the *Inconsistency* between his *Happiness* and *unpardoned Guilt*. That which only remains to be made appear is, That Pardon of Sin *alone* cannot secure him of *eternal Happiness* : And this is easily proven ; for there are Two Things which Pardon doth not, and yet with ut them both, 'tis impossible that Man should be happy. 1. Pardon of Sin gives Man no *Title*, no *Claim* to eternal Life and Happiness. *Innocence* in *Adam* did not give him a *Title* to Heaven : Can any then think that Pardon now can give us a *Title* ? *Eternal Life* was to be the Reward of a *Course of Obedience* ; nor had innocent *Adam* any Pretensions to it, till such Time as he had fulfill'd a *Course of perfect Obedience* : Far less then could fallen Man have any Pretensions to it, if only his Sins were pardoned. 2. Pardon of Sin doth not make Man meet for the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, for *Converse* and *Intercourse* with GOD. A convinced Sinner will see, that there is no Possibility of

of Access for him to the Enjoyment of GOD; unless there be an *entire Change* wrought upon his Nature; for how can Two of so very different Natures have any *mutual Complacency* in one another? GOD can have none in the sinful Nature of Man; nor can the sinful Nature of Man have any in the *holy* Nature of GOD: And it is what none can say, that Pardon changes the Nature of the Person that's pardoned.

Now to sum up what we have said under this Head, when an awakened Sinner puts the Question, *What must I do to be saved?* he just means, *How shall I obtain Happiness?* And this has these three in it. 1. How shall I get my *Sins pardoned?* 2. How shall I get a *Title to eternal Life?* 3. How shall I be made meet to be a Sharer of the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light?* Unless the Mind be fully satisfied as to these *three Enquiries*, it can never think it self *secure or happy*. That which comes in the

III. Place to be enquired into, is the *Nature of this (Concern)* which is the *genuine Issue* and *necessary Result* of sound Conviction. The Nature and Effects of this, we shall unfold to you in the following Particulars. And

1. To lay Salvation to Heart, or to be concerned about it seriously, imports *Dissatisfaction with all other Enjoyments*, so long as the Soul is in the Dark about this. The Man may possibly be possess'd of *great Things* in the World, he may have all going there with him according to Wish; but if once he begin to take *Salvation to Heart*, he will find Content of Mind in none of these Things. If such a one cast his Eye upon his

Enjoyments, his Riches, his Honours, his Pleasures, he will be sure to conclude as *Haman* did upon another account, *Esther* v. 13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I am at an Uncertainty about Salvation.* These Things cannot satisfy. What are they to a dying Man? One that apprehends himself just ready to be swallowed up of the Wrath of GOD, can relish no Sweetness in any of these Things, till once he be rid of the Fears of that. Thus we see 'tis with the *Taylor*: He, who but a little before was so anxious about the Prisoners, that he was ready to have made himself away for Fear of their Escape, turns now unconcerned about these Things; and we hear not, that, while all the Doors were open, he made any Provision for their Security, nor did he receive any Satisfaction from understanding that they were all safe. This Dissatisfaction is not such a *Discontent* as some fall into who are noways awakened, which leads them to fret, grudge and repine, because their Lot in a present World is not such as they would have it; no, but 'tis such a Dissatisfaction as flows from a solid Perswasion that these Things cannot afford Happiness, or avert impending and threatned Misery, which is so terrible in the Eyes of the alarmed Sinner.

2. This Concern about Salvation, imports *Thoughtfulness about the threatned Evils, and the Means of preventing them.* When the Soul has once got a View of Sin and Misery in their native Colours, and sees Misery threatning it, then this arrests the Thoughts; the Mind can ply it self to no other Thing with Pleasure, but only

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only to the Ways and Means of Escape. If other Thoughts intrude, they are presently rejected with Contempt, as impertinent. The Man indeed doth not deny it to be his Duty to be concerned about other Things; but he thinks it not *present Duty*, nay, he thinks it impertinent for him in his present Condition. He is like one that lives in a besieged City: The Enemy has made a Breach in the Walls, and threatens a sudden *Irruption*. In which Case the Man knows very well he is obliged to attend to the Duties of his ordinary Calling and Station; yet in the present Exigence, he doth not *judge it pertinent* to look that way; for if the Enemy once enter at the Breach, and sack the City, then he for ever loses the Advantage of any Thing that he gains by his other Endeavours; therefore he rather turns his *Thoughts* and *Contrivances* to the *Reparation* of the Breach, or the *pacifying* of the Enemy, if he find the Place *not tenable* against him. Just so is it in the Case of an awakened Sinner: He knows, that if the Wrath of GOD overtake him, he is for ever ruined; therefore his Thoughts are wholly bent upon this, how he may be *delivered* from the Wrath to come. Thus we see the *Psalmist* employ'd under Fears of impending Hazard, *Psal. xiii. 2.* *How long, says he, shall I take Counsel in my Soul, having Sorrow in my Heart daily? How long shall mine Enemy be exalted over me?* The Apprehensions he was under of Danger, put him upon many Contrivances how he might rid himself of it. This is always the Nature of Concern; it *arrests the Thoughts*, and keeps Men

fixed upon that about which the Soul is concerned.

3. This Concern has in it always *Earnestness of Desire after Salvation*. Desire is ever implied in Concern of Mind ; if a Man be concern'd how to avert a threatned Evil, he desires *Freedom* from it ; if he be concerned how to obtain any Good he wants, or retain what already he is possess'd of, the Soul ever immixes its Concern with Desire. This flows from the very Nature of Man's Soul ; for Desire is nothing else, but the cleaving of the rational Soul to that which appears *congruous, useful, and necessary* to its Happiness : So one that is awakened, and sees his Hazard, will certainly desire Salvation. Hence it is that we find *Christ* the Saviour, among the other Titles which are given to him in Scripture, obtain that famous one, *The Desire of all Nations*, Hag. ii. 6, 7. *For thus saith the LORD of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land : And I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come ; and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the LORD of Hosts.* A Saviour will be desired by such of all Nations as are awakened to see their Need of him.

- 4. This Concern about Salvation imports a *Commotion in the Affections*. A Soul full of Thoughts about Wrath *threatned* or *felt*, will have its Affections employed about it, according to the Account the Judgment gives of it. If Wrath be in any Measure felt, it will fill the Soul with Grief and Sorrow ; if it be
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looked upon as approaching, it will make the Man shake with Fear; if it be represented as ruining and destructive to the Soul, it will raise the highest *Hatred* and *Aversion*; if there be any apparent Possibility of Escape, it will excite *Hope* in the Soul. In one Word, in a Soul that lays Salvation seriously to Heart, every one of these Passions will take their Turn, according as *Occasion calls for them*, or the present Exercise of the Mind *requires and excites them*. Were we discoursing of this Concern about Salvation only, as it rests in the Mind, we should hold here; but here we are considering it not only as it is in its own *Nature*, but as it doth manifest it self in its *Effects*; and therefore

5. We say, where the Soul is thus uneasy for Want of Salvation, *thoughtful* about it, and going forth in *Desires after it*. This inward Temper and Frame of the Mind will discover it self in the *Words and Language*. Words are the Indications of the Thoughts of the Mind; and where the Mind is *swallowed up* of Concern about any Thing, so as to have all its Thoughts ingrossed by it, then of Necessity the Words must intimate so much. A Man indeed may be concern'd about something of *less Importance*, and this not hold; but when *Salvation* is laid to Heart, then the *Tongue* will be employed as well as the *Mind*. 'Tis storied, That the Father's Hazard made the Tongue-tacked Child speak; much more would its own Hazard have done so. Our Lord says, *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*, Matth. xii. 34. and indeed where there is very much Concern
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this way, it will not easily be retained ; it will be like a Fire that cannot endure to be pent up close in a Room, but must have a *Vent*. Thus we see it was with the *Jaylor*. That which lay nearest the Heart, takes the Start in Discourse ; *Sirs*, says he, *what must I do to be saved ?*

6. This inward Frame of Soul, this Concern of *Mind* leads to the *Use of Means*. As the Tongue will be employed in *enquiring*, and the Mind in *contriving* ; so the rest of the Man will be employed in *following after*, and *using the Means* that are suited to give Relief. Thus we see it was with the *Jaylor* ; he presently comes to the *Apostles*, and seeks after *Direction* and *Help* from them. No doubt he had heard of them, what the possess'd Damsel, in the 17th Verse of this Chapter, cries out, that *they were the Servants of the living GOD, who made it their Work to shew to Men the Way of Salvation* ; and this makes him address himself to them, as the readiest Expedient, the *best Means* to get rid of his Fears, and to be solv'd of the important Scruple that now lay so near his Heart.

7. Not only will this Concern drive to the Use of Means, but it will stir up to Diligence in the Use of them. It will fire the Soul with such Activity, as will carry it over that natural Sluggishness that's in the Heart of Man, as the natural and genuine Fruit of the deprav'd Nature. The unconcerned Man, the Man that's half awaken'd, will say with the Sluggard, *There is a Lion in the Way, and I shall be slain in the Streets*. He will have a thousand trifling Difficulties that

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that will retard him, and keep him back ; but when one lays Salvation to Heart, he will soon get over all these, and fall close to the diligent Use of Means, in Spite of all Difficulties. Thus it was with the *Jaylor*. He *sprang in, and came trembling, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?* He wanted not his own Grounds to fear the Success of his Attempt. What, might he think, will these Men, whom I us'd so hardly but the Night before, deal so kindly by me, as to help me in this *miserable Pinch* ? And will that GOD, whom I have provok'd to be my Enemy, tender me *any Relief* ? But Wrath pursu'd him so close at the Heels, that he durst not *stay off* on any of these Accounts, but hazards the Issue be what it will. An awaken'd Sinner is ever brought to the Lepers Resolution, *2 Kings vii. 3, 4.* He sees an inevitable Necessity of *dying* if he sit still in his present Condition, or if he joyn himself to his old Friends : And therefore he will rather choose to venture all upon the Mercy of GOD and his Servants, whom he takes for his Enemies ; as knowing that there he has a *Peradventure* for Life, whereas he has not that *same* any where else.

8. This Concern will discover it self, by *putting the Soul in an active and waiting Posture, ready to receive any Injunction, and to comply with it without Delay.* One that comes thus to be concern'd about Salvation, will not stand to *dispute* the Terms propos'd ; but will *greedily* wait for, and *readily* accept of them, if practicable, if possible. Thus we see it is with the poor Man in our *Text.* He comes not to *make* but *accept* Terms.
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Sirs, says he, what must I do to be saved? as if he had said, I am resolved to scruple nothing ye shall enjoyn me; tell me but what I shall do, and here am I, ready to accept of any Proposal that ye shall in GOD's Name make unto me.

Thus we have unfolded unto you the *Nature* of this Concern which a solidly convinced Sinner will have about Salvation, and that from the *Text*. I shall now proceed,

IV. To enquire *why it is that a solidly awaken'd Sinner does thus lay Sa'luation to Heart above all Things*. An Account of this Matter we conceive may be given in Two or Three Propositions.

1. A strong Desire of *Self-preservation* is inlaid in the Mind of Man, and so closely woven in with his very Frame and Make, that there is no getting rid of it. Man may as soon cease to be, as cease to desire his own Preservation. No Man yet hated his own *Flesh*, but cherisbeth it, says the *Apostle*, *Eph. v. 29*. If that hold in the *laxer Sense*, when a Man's near Relation is call'd his own *Flesh*, it must hold much more, when 'tis taken in the most *strict and close Sense*, for a Man's self.

2. The necessary Consequence of this Desire of *Self-preservation*, is an utter *Abhorrence* unto every Thing that is contrary to Nature, or that appears destructive of it; and every Thing appears more or less *terrible*, as it is more or less *hurtful* to Nature. These Things which threaten us with utter Ruin, cannot but fill the Mind with terrible Horror. Hence it is that Death is called the *King of Terrors*; because it threatens Nature, not with some *Alterations* of less Importance, but with entire *Dissolution*. Death of all Things

Things is the most opposite to Nature; and every other Thing is more or less terrible, as it has more or less of Death in it.

3. An *awakened Soul*, a solidly *convinced Sinner*, sees, by that *Light* that GOD has let into his Soul, the *Wrath of GOD*, the *second Death*, ready to lay hold upon him, and ruine him *eternally*; therefore cannot but have the greatest Aversion possible to it. What will put a Man to Flight, if not the Sight of inevitable Death behind him? Then, if ever, will a Man flee, when he sees himself brought to that lamentable Pinch, that he must either *flee* or *die*.

4. Hence it inevitably follows, that such a Man who sees himself in Danger of *utter Ruin*, in the Case he is in, *will*, nay, of Necessity *must*, lay himself out to the *utmost*, or be concern'd above all, for Salvation from threatn'd Ruin or Misery. That Principle of Self-preservation, and that Abhorrency of what is hurtful to Nature, which are the *Spring* of all a Man's Actions, cannot but carry the whole Man, and all the Powers of the Man, to its Assistance, when it sees that the *Whole is endangered*.

Having thus shortly discuss'd what belongs to the *Explication* of this *Truth*, we proceed now to make some *practical Improvement* of it. And among many *Uses* that might be made of it, we shall only make *one*, and that is of *Trial*.

Is it so, that a soundly convinced Sinner will lay Salvation to Heart above all Things else? Then here is a *Touchstone* whereby ye may try whether or not ye be indeed *convinced* of Sin, and whether

whether soundly or not; and in the Name of GOD we obtest you to put this to *Trial*; for

1. Unless ye *know* whether ye be convinc'd of Sin or not, ye *cannot know* whether ye have got Good of all that we have discoursed to you formerly. This we know, that ye are either *bettered* or *worsted* by it; for *as the Rain cometh down, and the Snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the Earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater:* So shall my Word be, saith the LORD, that goeth forth out of my Mouth: It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the Thing whereto I send it, Isa. lv. 10, 11. We have spent many Sermons on this Design of *Conviction*; and now ye are concern'd to try, and we are concern'd to try what has been the Fruit of them. If ye be not yet *convinc'd* of Sin, then ye have *lost* the Advantage of all that has been said on this Head.

2. Try this fairly, we obtest you; for if ye be not *convinc'd* ye are like to *lose the Advantage* of all that's to be said from the *Text* we are now entring upon. We shall, if the LORD will, from this Scripture *hold forth* and *make Offer* of Christ Jesus our Lord, as the only Saviour of lost Sinners: And if ye be not convinced soundly of Sin, ye are like to lose the Advantage of such Offers; for none will welcome or *entertain* them, save only such as are *convinced* of Sin.

3. Try, for the LORD's sake, whether ye be convinced of Sin or not; for not a few wofully *deceive* themselves in this Matter. They take that

that *general* and *unconcern'd* Acknowledgment of Sin, which every one is led to by *Custom, Education,* or some such Way, for that *solid Conviction* which is necessary in order to our *cordial* Acceptance of the Gospel : And this Deceit is of most *dangerous Consequence*, because it lies near the Foundation ; and a Crack there must of Necessity be fatal and ruining.

That ye may be at a Point in this Matter, we shall again run over the several Parts of that Description we gave of this Concern about Salvation, which we would now have you to try your selves by.

But before we enter upon this *Trial*, there is one Sort of Persons we would set by, as not concern'd in it ; and that is, such as are openly profane, *Drunkards, Swearers, Liars, Whoremongers, Thieves,* and the like. It were gross Folly to make a Trial of such who have their Mark upon their *Foreheads*. These Monsters are so far from being concern'd about *Salvation*, that they seem concern'd to make their own *Damnation sure* ; in as far as they take the plainest, the surest and straightest Course to *ruine* their own Souls. As their *Damnation lingers* not, so it will be *just*, because they run upon a seen Evil. They deserve scarce Compassion, who can tell that he *who doth such Things is guilty of Death* ; and yet not only *do*, but *take Pleasure in them that do them*. To endeavour to make a Discovery of such Persons, by an Application of narrow and searching Marks, were as if we did busy ourselves in separating huge Stones from Corn by a *fine Sieve*, when it

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were much more easily done with the *Hand*. These we set aside in the Entry, because their Sins go *before them into Judgment*. But besides these notorious Sinners, there are others who are no less *Strangers* to solid Conviction than they, upon whom nevertheless 'tis something more hard to *prove* it. And therefore for the Discovery of such, we shall now proceed to deal a little more closely with your Consciences; and since your Concernment in this Matter is so great, as we just now did shew it to be, we obtest you to be serious in this Matter, which is, past all Peradventure, to turn either to your eternal Advantage, or to your eternal Disadvantage.

Ye all do profess your selves *convinc'd* of Sin. But now if it be so, I demand of you in *GOD's Name*, Have ye ever to this Day been *concern'd* about *Salvation*, or laid it to Heart above all Things? If ye have not, then to this Day ye have never been *soundly* convinced of Sin, whatever your Pretences are: And so ye are found Liars in this Matter, and Deceivers of your own Souls. If ye say ye have been, or are seriously concerned about Salvation, then

1. I pose your Consciences, and I demand ye may pose them with this Question, Can ye be *satisfied* with other Things while ye are at an utter *Uncertainty* about *Salvation*? If so, if ye can be well pleas'd, and have Rest in your Mind, and live contentedly at an Uncertainty about Salvation, provided ye be in Health of Body, and your worldly Concerns thrive, then we say, ye have never yet been concern'd about Salvation, and therefore are yet Strangers to that *sound*

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Conviction, without which none will be content to accept of *Christ*.

2. I pose you in *GOD's Name* upon it, *What Thoughts do ye spend upon this Subject?* Persons who can spend whole Days and Nights, and Weeks, and never have a serious Thought about Salvation, they certainly are not laying it to Heart: But that I may bring this *second Question* yet a little closer to the Conscience, I shall break it into one or Two others; and (1) I pose you on it, *What Thoughts do ye choose?* Persons may sometimes be *opprest* with Thoughts that they entertain the uttermost *Aversion* to; or they may be *forc'd* from the Thoughts they would for ever desire to *dwell upon*. A Man that is thoroughly awakened may by the impetuous Violence of Temptation, or the inevitable Occasions of Life, be obliged, as it were, sometimes to intermit Thoughts of Salvation, and entertain Thoughts about other Things: But when he has Leave to make Choice, then he will choose to think of Salvation. Now, if you choose *ordinarily* to think of other Things than of Salvation, then there is no such Force upon you, it discovers you *unconcerned* about Salvation, and consequently Strangers to that *solid Conviction*, that issues always in such a *serious Concern* as we have been speaking of. (2.) I further pose you, whether or not do the Thoughts about Salvation *frequently press in upon you*, when ye are busied about the ordinary Occasions of Life, when employed in your ordinary Occupations, when ye are working, or conversing? If such Thoughts are never wont to visit you even then, it is a sad Sign that ye do

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not lay Salvation seriously to Heart ; for certainly that which the Mind is *much concern'd* about, will frequently *drive* the Thoughts that Way. (3.) I put this one Question more to you, What Thoughts are these on which *your own Time is spent* ? All your Time, ye may think, is *your own Time*: But there is a certain Portion of Time which may be call'd so upon a peculiar Account; such are these *Seasons*, wherein we are neither engaged in *Business* nor in *Diversion*, as when we *walk alone* in the Fields, when we *separate* our selves in order to rest at Night, when we are *undressing* our selves, or when we are *waking upon our Beds* in the Night Time, or before we engage in Company in the *Morning*. Now, it is in reference to such Seasons as these, that we enquire into your Thoughts. If these Seasons be not employed in Thoughts about Salvation, 'tis a sad Sign that ye are not in *earnest* about it indeed.

3. I put this Question to you, *What are your Desires* ? Man is a desiring Creature : He is sensible of Self-insufficiency, and therefore is ever desiring and longing after some one Thing or other that's suited to his Need, or at least which he thinks to be so. Now, what is it that ye desire ? Is it *Salvation* ? Is it *Christ* ? It may be, ye never have a Desire after Salvation, but when ye are laid upon a *sick Bed*, and fall under *Fears* of Death ; and even then, where there is *one* Desire for eternal Salvation, there are *many* for Freedom from Death, for some longer Life. Dying *David* speaking of that Covenant whereby Salvation was ensured to him, could call it *all his Desire*, *although my House be not so with GOD* ; yet

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he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant ordered in all Things and sure ; for this is all my Salvation and all my Desire, although he make it not to grow, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. If your Souls do not frequently go out in Desires after GOD, after Salvation ; 'tis a shrewd Evidence that ye are not concern'd about Salvation, and consequently that ye are not yet convinc'd of Sin.

4. Are your Hearts ever *affected about Salvation* ? When there is a Concern about any Thing in the Soul of Man, it never fails to set the Heart a work, and to fill the Affections. Now, surely if ye be in any good Degree concern'd about Salvation ye will be affected. (1.) Have ye never any *Fears of falling short of Salvation* ? Let us fear, lest a Promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of us should seem to come short, says the Apostle, Heb. iv. 1. A Heart weighted, and really concern'd about Salvation, will see many Grounds to fear that possibly it may lose Salvation at last. The *Falls* of others, the *Difficulties* and *Opposition* in the Way to Salvation, and its own felt *Weakness*, will ever occasion Fear in the Heart about this. What one is very concern'd to have, he is always fear'd to lose. (2.) Do ye never *taste any Thing of the Anger of GOD* in the Threatnings ? These that are concern'd about Salvation, get such a Taste of GOD's Displeasure, as is wont to fill their Hearts with *Grief* and *Sorrow*. If ye know nothing of this, it looks very ill, and speaks you not duly concern'd about Salvation. (3.) Do ye never find any Thing of *Shame for Sin* rising in your Heart ? If none of these

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these Affections be mov'd, 'tis a *sad* but *sure* Evidence that ye are not concern'd about Salvation, and consequently that ye are not yet *solidly* convinc'd of Sin.

5. Whither *runs your Discourse* commonly? Do ye never speak of *Salvation*? We told you formerly, that when the *Heart* is much concern'd about Salvation, the *Mouth* will sometimes be employed in speaking about it. Now, where runs your *Talk* commonly? Is there never a Word of Salvation in your *Discourse*? 'Tis a *sad* Sign that ye never yet were convinc'd of Sin, that ye never yet laid Salvation to *Heart*. Do not think that it will clear you, to tell that ye must conform your *Discourse* to the Temper of those with whom ye converse: For I say, (1.) Do ye never converse with any Body that would be willing to entertain *Discourse* about Salvation? If it be so, then I am sure 'tis *Choice* and not *Necessity* makes it so: This therefore is a further Proof of your Unconcernedness about Salvation, ye slight the Converse of such as may help you. (2.) Are ye never in a Company where ye may *lead* the *Discourse*? If ye be a Master of a Family, a Parent, or any Superior, I am sure amongst your Inferiors ye may have the leading of the *Discourse*: Nay, tho' ye be Servants, ye may some time or other have as fair a Pretence, to *prescribe* to others the Subject of *Discourse*, as they have to *prescribe* to you. (3.) If ye shift the Evidence of all this, I shall put here a Question or Two to you, which will, if faithfully applied, make a Discovery of you in this Matter:

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And 1. Do ye not weary of the *Company* and of the *Discourse* that has no Respect to Salvation?

2. Is it not a *Restraint* upon you, when ye are kept from discoursing of Salvation? If ye be really concern'd about it, I am sure it will be so sometimes with you. But I proceed, and in the

6th Place, I put the Question to you, *What Diligence is there in using the Means of Salvation?*

No Man that understands either Scripture or Reason, can think the Man concern'd about Salvation, that *useth not the Means* of Salvation. Now, because I judge that here we may meet with not a few of you, I shall descend to Particulars, and deal plainly with you about this Matter. The Means of Salvation are of Three Sorts, *secret, private, and publick.* Now, I will put some Questions to you in reference to each of them.

I begin with these which we call *secret*, and of them I shall only name *secret Reading of the Scriptures, and Prayer.* Lev. xviii. 5. Rom. x. 13.

And in reference to these I shall put Two or Three Questions to you. And (1.) Are ye *Neglecters of secret Prayer?* Can ye rise in the Morning, and go to your Work, and never bow a Knee to GOD? To such we dare say confidently, Ye were never yet concern'd about your Souls Salvation. (2.) Are ye ever concern'd to know what *Success* ye have in your Prayers? Most part deal I fear by their Prayers, as some unnatural Parents do by their Children; they lay them down to others, and never enquire what becomes of them, whether they die or live: Which argues that they are not in *earnest* in them. We ever find the Saints recorded in Scripture

in earnest about the Acceptance and Success of their Prayers. (3.) Are all your secret Prayers *confined* to stated Times, it may be *Morning* and *Evening*? Or are ye frequently breathing out your Desires in *Ejaculations*? If ye neglect these, 'tis a sad Sign ye are not concern'd about Salvation. Ejaculations, I may say, are the genuine Effect of Concern about Salvation. Here, I do not approve of these common Forms that People use to the great Scandal of Religion and Offence of GOD, *GOD save us*, the *LORD deliver us*, upon every Turn. These surely argue Want of Concern about Salvation, and Want of due Respect to GOD. Persons duly concern'd about Salvation will speak of GOD with more Fear and Dread, than is commonly in these Expressions, which, as they are us'd, are certainly a palpable Breach of the third Command. But when I speak of *Ejaculations*, I mean thereby *affectionate* and *reverend Desires* sent up to GOD about Salvation: And I believe there shall scarce be found any really concerned about Salvation, who are utter Strangers to them. (4.) Do ye neglect the *Reading of the Word* of GOD, or do ye not? Such of you as will not be at Pains to learn to read the Word of GOD, I can scarce think you in earnest concern'd about Salvation, since ye neglect so necessary a Mean; at least I think ye have need to be very sure of the Grounds ye lean upon, if ye do conclude your selves really concern'd about it, while ye neglect this Duty. When People are not at Pains to *read*, or take not Care to get the Scripture *read* to them in secret; if through Age they be incapable

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pable, 'tis a sad Sign of Want of Concern about Salvation. I would desire you to consider seriously that one Command given by GOD to his Church of old. *He gave them his Laws and his Statutes, which if a Man do, he shall even live in them, Lev. xviii. 5.* And he gives them a peremptory Command how to use them, *Deut. xi. 18, 19, 20. Ye shall lay up these my Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, and bind them for a Sign upon your Hand, that they may be as Frontlets between your Eyes: And ye shall teach them your Children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: And thou shalt write them upon the Door-posts of thine House, and upon thy Gates.* Every where they were to have the Law of GOD along with them. How they can be concern'd duly about Salvation, who neglect the Use of that which GOD commands, and commands so peremptorily, I do not well understand. (5.) Do ye take heed to what ye read? Do ye learn to do all the Words of the LORD; or do ye endeavour to *understand* what ye read? In a Word, are ye *affected* with what ye read, or are ye *not*? If ye be not, then 'tis Evidence enough, that ye are not concern'd seriously about Salvation: So that ye are not solidly convinc'd of Sin. If ye either neglect the Use of these Means of Salvation, or prove unconcern'd as to the Success of your Use of them, 'tis undoubtedly sure that yet ye have not laid Salvation to Heart: I do not indeed say, but even the Children of GOD may be more remiss at some times than at other Times, but entirely to neglect or prove unconcern'd, they cannot

not, nor indeed can any that's laying Salvation to Heart. But

I come, in the *second* Place, to enquire into your *Diligence in your Families*: And here I shall say only Two Things. (1.) This Concern about Salvation will make those who have Families careful in the Performance of Family-duties, and these who are Members of Families careful in Attendance upon them. When once a Man is serious about Salvation, he will be sure to set about these Duties which may any way contribute to his Safety and Establishment. (2.) When a Person is once concern'd about Salvation, then there will some Regard be had to the *Success* of such Duties, that is, such an one will take Care to know whether he is *better* or *worse* by the Duties he follows. Now, bring these Two home to your own Consciences: And let me ask you what Conscience ye make of performing or of attending to these Duties? If ye either neglect them, or turn indifferent as to the Success of them, past all Peradventure, ye are in a dangerous Condition. A Man that sees himself in a State of Misery, and thinks seriously of Salvation, will not be content to trifle in these Duties which have so *immediate*, so *remarkable* an Influence upon his eternal Condition. If he neglects them, then he lies open to the *Fury* of GOD, which, according to the Prophet *Jeremiah's* Prayer, will fall upon *the Heathen, and the Families that call not on the Name of GOD*, *Psal. lxxix. 6.* *Jer. x. 25.* If he prove remiss, he falls under the Wo denounced against the Deceiver, *Mal. i. 14.* *Cursed be the Deceiver which hath in his Flock a Male,*
and

and voweth and sacrificeth to the LORD a corrupt Thing. And he thinks his Case hard enough already, without the Addition of that new Wrath.

The last Sort of Means of Salvation are such as are call'd *publick*. A Concern about Salvation will discover it self in reference to these many Ways; of which we shall only name Two or Three. (1.) It will make us *lay hold* upon every Opportunity of this sort. A Man that's in great Danger, and knows himself to be so, will be sure to frequent these Places which promise him Safety. (2.) It will be a *Satisfaction* and Matter of Joy to him that there are any such Opportunities, and that his Case is not entirely desperate and hopeless. (3.) When he comes to them, he will still have Salvation in his *Eye*, and will greedily look what Aspect every Thing he hears and sees has upon his own Salvation. (4.) He will not be satisfied with any Thing unless he *see* how he may be saved. Now, is this your Carriage, when ye pretend to be concern'd about Salvation? Do ye with Satisfaction embrace every Opportunity of the Ordinances? Do ye joy when they say to you, *Let us go up to the House of GOD*? Do ye keep your Eye fixt upon Salvation? Or, are ye more *intent* upon other Things? This is a good Way to know whether ye be concern'd about Salvation or not. Now, to conclude this Mark, I say, that if ye do *neglect*, or *carelessly use* the Means of Salvation, whether *private*, *secret*, or *publick*, it discovers your Unconcernedness about Salvation. A Man
that

that has fallen into the Sea, and is in Hazard of drowning, will haste toward every Thing that may contribute to his Safety ; and when he comes near the Shore, he will not spend Time in observing the *Form* of the Shore, but its *Usefulness* to him. So a Man that sees himself in Danger of sinking in the Wrath of GOD, will look to all the Means of Salvation; and that which his Eye will fix *principally* upon, will certainly be their *Usefulness* to himself. That Duty, and that Way and Manner of performing it, that levels most directly at his Salvation, will please him best. I shall in the

7th and last Place, Put this one Question more home to you for Trial. Will *small* and *inconsiderable Difficulties* make you lay aside Thoughts of Salvation, or the Use of the Means? If so, 'tis a sad Sign that ye are not yet arrived at that Concern, which is the Fruit of sound Conviction. One that is soundly convinced of Sin, and is thence induced to lay Salvation to Heart, will not stop at any Thing he meets with in his Way: For he can see no *Lion in the Way*, that's so terrible as that *Wrath of GOD* he sees pursuing him ; nor can he hear of any Enjoyment, to make him turn back again, that's so valuable as that Salvation he seeks after. All Hindrances that ye can meet with in the Way to Heaven, I mean, such as are proposed for rational Inducements, to perswade you to give over, may be reduced to one of two. The Tempter must either say, Desist and quite Thoughts of Salvation ; for ye will run a great *Hazard* if ye step one Step further ; or if ye will

will desist, ye shall have this *Advantage* or the other ; but a solidly convinced Sinner has two Questions that are enough for ever to confound and silence such Proposals. The (1.) is this, Ye tell me, That if I hold on, I shall meet with such a Hazrd ; I must be *undervalued*, *reproach'd*, *oppos'd*, and, in fine, meet with all the *ill Treatment* that the Devil, the World, and Sin can give me : But now, Satan, I have one Question to propose to you here. Are all these, taken together, as ill as *Damnation* ? if not, then I will hold on. But whereas, O Tempter, (2.) Ye say, That I shall get this Pleasure or the other, if I desist and quite the Way that I have espoused, I ask you, Is that *Pleasure* as good as *eternal Salvation* ? Or will it make *Damnation* tolerable ? These two Questions make a Soul, that's really concern'd about Salvation, hold on in the diligent Use of Means. A Man if ever he run, will then run, when he has Happiness in his Eye, and Misery pursuing him ; and thus it is with every Sinner that's thoroughly awakened, and lays Salvation to Heart ; therefore 'tis no Wonder such an one refuse to be *discouraged*, or *give over*, whatever he meets with in the Way : But now, are there not among you, not a few who will be startled at the least Difficulty, and quite Thoughts of the Means of Salvation, for very Trifles ? This is a sad Evidence, that ye are not indeed solidly convinced of Sin.

Now I have shortly run through these Particulars ; and, in the Conclusion, I *enquire* of every one of you,

1. Have

1. Have ye *applied* these Marks to your own Consciences, as we went through them? or, have ye carelessly heard them, as if ye had no Concernment in them? To such of you as have not applied them, I say only in so many Words. (1.) If ye will not judge your selves, ye shall surely be condemn'd of the LORD. When Persons will not try their Case, 'tis a sure Sign that Matters are not right with them. (2.) We may safely enough determine, that ye are unconcerned about Salvation and fast asleep in your Sins, nay, dead in them. (3.) Ye will come to such a sensible Determination of your *Estate* ere it be long, as will force you to think upon these Things with *Seriousness*, but not with *Satisfaction*. But to such as have been applying these Marks as we went along, in the

2. Place, I propose this Question, Do ye find upon Trial that ye have indeed been laying Salvation to Heart above all Things, or that yet ye are not in earnest about it? I beg it of you, nay, I obtest you, to deal impartially with your own Souls; and I am sure ye may come to understand how it is with you. This Question, if fairly applied, will divide you into two Sorts.

1. Such *as are not laying Salvation to Heart*, and so have not been convinced of Sin.

2. Such *as are really concerned about Salvation*, and are with the *Jaylor*, saying, *What must I do to be saved?*

I shall conclude this *Doctrine* in a short Address to these two Sorts of Persons, and then proceed

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ceed to the Apostles Answer to the *Jaylor's* Question.

I begin with the *First*, such of you as are *not convinced of Sin*, and therefore do not lay Salvation to Heart. Are there any such miserable Wretches here, after all that has been said? No doubt there are; and I fear that the most Part are such. To you I say,

1. Whence is it that ye are not convinced of your Sin and Misery, which has been so plainly, and at so great Length inculcate upon you? Surely it must be upon one of three Accounts: Either, *first*, Ye have not heeded what has been said; or, *secondly*, Ye have not *believed* it; or, *thirdly*, Ye have some one *false Defence* or other, unto which ye lean. Now because this is a Matter of no small Moment both to you and us, we shall here discourse a little of these *Three*. 'Tis of great Moment to you to be undeceived here, because a Deceit here will ruine you eternally; and 'tis of great Moment to us, because unless we get you undeceived in this Matter, we lose all our Pains in holding forth *Christ* and the Way of Salvation by him. Persons who are not convinced of Sin, will, past all Peradventure, *make light* of Christ, and *refuse* him.

(1.) Then, I shall speak a Word to such as have not *taken heed* to, or *regarded* what has been said for their Conviction. I make no Doubt but there are some such here, whose Hearts have been with the Fool's Eyes, in the Corners of the Earth, and who have scarce been thinking all the while what they were hearing. Your Consciences can tell you whether

ther this has been your Practice ; and if it has, then I say, (1.) It is indeed no Wonder that ye do not lay Salvation to Heart, that ye are not convinced of Sin ; since ye will not hear what will serve for Conviction, and is designed that way. (2.) *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?* Has GOD condescended so far to you, that he has sent his Servants to you, and will ye not be at the Pains to give them a Hearing ? How do ye think would your Master or your Ruler take it, should ye deal thus by him ? If when he were speaking to you, either himself or by his Servants, ye were turning away your Ear from him ; would he not resent it highly ? And has GOD any Reason to bear with an Indignity at your Hand, that your Master would not suffer ? (3.) Ye have Reason to admire that he has not turned you before now into *Hell*. This would effectually have convinced you, and repair'd the lesed Honour, the injured Glory of GOD. (4.) I say to you, ye have lost *an Opportunity* ; and none can assure you that ever ye shall have the like again. GOD may give over striving with you, and never more attempt your Conviction : And wo to you when he departs from you. (5.) I say, ye have slighted GOD's Command, which enjoyns you to *take heed how ye hear, and what ye hear*, *Mark iv. 24. Luke viii. 18.* It is not for nothing that our Lord enjoyns both to observe the *Matter* and *Manner* of Hearing : As he gave those Commands, so he will take Care that they be not slighted. He will avenge himself of these who despise his Authority in them.

And

And therefore I say (6.) If ye refuse a little longer to hear, then 'tis like, nay, 'tis certain, he will speak to you himself, and make you take heed, if not to what ye hear, yet to what ye shall feel, to your eternal Disquietment: He will speak to you in Wrath, and vex you in his hot Displeasure. A remarkable Scripture to this Purpose we have, *Ezek. xiv. 7. For every one of the House of Israel, or of the Stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and sets up his Idols in his Heart, and putteth the Stumbling-block of his Iniquity before his Face, and cometh to a Prophet to enquire of him concerning me, I the LORD will answer him by my self!* A Set of People there was in this Prophet's Days, who were his Hearers; and they came under Pretence of hearing or enquiring into the Mind of GOD: But they were but *mocking* GOD, as ye have done, and did not regard what was said to them by the Prophet. Well, the LORD will no more deal with them by the Prophet, but will take them into his own immediate Hand, and deal with them by himself. The Words in the first Language run thus, *I the LORD; it shall be answered to him in me. I will not let any answer him but my self.* As if he had said, My Servants are too mild to deal with such Wretches as mock me; I will not answer them any more with *Words*; I will give over speaking to them, and will answer them by *Deeds*, and that not of Mercy, but of Judgment. Now think on it in Time, how terrible your Condition is like to be, if GOD shall say to you, I have spoken to these Wretches, and laid their

their Sin before them by my Servants ; but their Hearts have been so taken up with their Idols, that they have not heeded them : I will therefore speak to them by *terrible Deeds*, I will *set my Face against them*, and will make them a *Sign and a Proverb* ; and I will cut them off from the midst of my People, and ye shall know that I am the **LORD**, as it follows in the 8 Verse of that forecited Chapter. I leave you to think upon these Things, and proceed

(2.) To speak to such as therefore are not convinc'd, because they did not believe what they have heard upon this Head. I make no Doubt that there are not a few such here ; nay, I may say, that all who are not convinced and awakened to a serious Consideration of their State and Condition, ow their Security and Unconcernedness to this woful Unbelief, that's a Sin pregnant with all other Sins, that alone has in it whatever is hateful to **GOD**, or destructive to the Soul of Man. To such as have heard but do not believe, we say, (1.) Ye have not refused *our Testimony*, but the *Testimony of GOD*, who cannot lie : And he that believeth not the Record of **GOD**, hath made him a Liar ; than which none can charge a greater Impiety upon the holy **GOD**, who values himself upon this, that he cannot lie, which is peculiar to **GOD** only ; for however there be of the Creatures that do not lie, yet of none of them can it be said, that they cannot lie ; this is **GOD's** sole Prerogative. (2.) Ye have shut your Eyes upon *clear Light*. Your Sin and Misery have been set before you in the clearest Light, the Light of

of GOD's Word. The Matter has not been *minced*, but ye have been plainly and *freely dealt* with upon this Head: Therefore ye need to look well to your selves, that GOD strike you not judicially blind. This he is frequently wont to do to those who resist clear Light; he leaves them to Satan, the God of this World, to blind their Eyes, and gives them up to *strong Delusions to believe Lies, that they may all be damn'd that believe not.* (3.) We did call in Heaven and Hell, the Creator and the whole Creation, as Witnesses of that certain and sad Truth, that Man has *sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD.* I know not one Witness more but *Sense*, and since no less is like to do, take Care that Sense of Misery do not convince you of its Truth. Hell will make you, even the most *incredulous* of you, *believe*, and *tremble* too, as the Devils and Damned do.

(3.) I come now to discourse those who therefore are not convinced of Sin, or induced to lay Salvation to Heart, notwithstanding the Pains taken on them, because they have *defended themselves* against the Force of the Truths proposed, by some Shifts, which upon Occasion they use for quieting or keeping quiet their Consciences. Of this Sort I fear there are many, too many here present; and therefore I shall deal more particularly and closely with such. We have laid before you all your Sin and Misery; but few are yet awakened; few say with the *Taylor* in the *Text*, *What must I do to be saved?* Whence is it so? Has not Sin been laid open to your View? Has not the sad but certain

Truth, *That all have sinned and come short of the Glory of GOD*, been plainly demonstrate from many incontestable Evidences? Nay more, has not the particular Concernment of every one of us in this Truth, been plainly unfolded? Yes, no doubt: But whence is it then, that the most Part are so secure? that there is so little Fear of Hell, Wrath and Damnation amongst us? Are there none here who have *Reason* to fear it? No doubt, there are many, too many such amongst us: But here it lies; when the Truth is pressed home upon the Conscience, we have a strange Way of putting divine Truths away from us. Now, I shall lay open the *Nakedness* of these *Fences*, behind which most of us screen our selves from Conventions.

1. When Sin and Misery are discovered, some there are amongst the Hearers of the Gospel, who *take with the Charge*. If we say to them, as *Nathan* did to *David*, in the Application of the Parable, *Thou art the Man, thou art the Woman* that has sinned, that art in Danger of the eternal Wrath of GOD. O then, answers the Sinner, 'tis very true what ye tell, *I have sinned*; and GOD be merciful to us, *we are all Sinners*; I hope GOD will be merciful to me. And there the Wound is skinned over, as soon as made, and the Person is heal. This is the Refuge to which many of you betake your selves: But we shall pursue you to the *Horns of GOD's Altar*, and fetch you down thence. Ye say GOD is merciful: I say (11) 'Tis very true, he is so. The LORD has long since proclaimed

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ed his Name. *The LORD, the LORD GOD merciful and gracious, and he delights in such as hope in his Mercy,* Psal. cxlvii. 11. But (2.) notwithstanding of the Mercy of GOD, there are but few *that shall be saved,* Luke xiii. 23. Now, who has told you, that ye shall be among that few? Ye say, ye hope to be amongst that few who shall find Mercy; and I fear ye shall not. Now, whether are your Hopes or my Fears best grounded? I can give some Account of my Fears; but I doubt if ye can give any of your Hopes. I say, I fear that *many* of you be damn'd; for, as I said before, there are but few that shall be saved; and these few are all *penitent Sinners*, who have been convinced of Sin and Misery, and have laid Salvation to Heart above all Things, and have *accepted* of *Christ* upon the Gospel Terms. Now, 'tis obvious that there are but very few of you of this Sort; and our Lord has said positively, *That he who believeth not, shall not see Life, but shall be damned.* Now where are the Grounds of your Hopes? Ye say, GOD is *merciful*; And I answer, he is *just* also; and his Justice has as fair a Plea against you, as his Mercy has for you: Ye say, he has saved some Sinners, and therefore hope he will have Mercy upon you. I answer, He has damn'd more than he hath had Mercy upon, and therefore he may deal so with you too: O but, say ye, I cannot think that GOD will be so cruel as to damn me. I answer, What more Cruelty will it be to damn you, than to damn the heathen World? What more Cruelty to damn you, than to damn the Generality of Unbelievers, which make the

far greater Part of the Hearers of the Gospel? In fine, is it Cruelty to damn you, who have innumerable Sins, when it was none, GOD thought it none, to send so many Angels into Hell for one Sin? Is it Cruelty to punish you, who have neglected the Means of Salvation, when others have been damn'd that *never* had them? Who would say the Prince were cruel, or wanted Mercy, who caus'd execute the threatned Punishment against obstinate Offenders? Now, where are all your Hopes from the Mercy of GOD? I tell you, there are Thousands this Day in Hell, who have been ruined by such presumptuous Hopes of Mercy; and I fear there are many more who shall be so, ere all be done.

II. Others again, when beat from this *Defence*, betake themselves to another not one whit better: O, say they, we are in no Danger, for we *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*. I answer, (1.) 'Tis very true, they who do believe are indeed out of all Hazard. But I say, (2.) Are ye sure that ye *believe*? Many have been *mistaken*; and are ye sure that ye are in the right. The foolish Virgins thought themselves Believers, and it may be went a further Length than ye can pretend to have gone; as ye may see if ye look to the Parable, *Matth. xxv. 1*. They had Professions, they had *Lamps*; upon the Bridegroom's Call they awake, and endeavour to *trim their Lamps* to make them shine; they are convinced of the *Want of Oyl*, and endeavour to get it; and yet were eternally shut out from the Presence of GOD. Now with what Face dare

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dare any of you pretend to believe, when ye come not up that Length that we have just now let you see others come, and yet perish? Are there not among you who will say ye believe, and yet can *drink drunk*, can *swear*, *mock Religion*, and entertain a *Heart-hatred* at such as go beyond you in Strictness, can ridicule them, and call them Hypocrites? I fear there may be some such amongst you. I tell you, ye have no Faith but such as may go to Hell with you. *Faith works by Love*, is a *Heart-purifying Grace*, and discovers it self by a Course of Obedience, according to that of the Apostle *James*, *Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works*, Jam. ii. 16. (3.) Ye say ye believe: When did ye believe? Did ye always believe? Yes, we always did believe. Say ye so? *O horrid Ignorance!* Ye say ye did always believe; I say, ye did never to this Day believe; for we are not born Believers, but Unbelievers; and if ye think that ye did always believe, 'tis Proof enough, that to this Day ye are *Strangers* to the precious Faith of GOD's Elect. I shall not at present insist in discovering the Folly of such a Pretence to Faith, because I shall have Occasion, if the LORD will, afterwards to discourse more at length, of Faith, and of the Difference betwixt it, and those Counterfeits of it whereon many do rely. Only I say at present, that where Faith is, it will lead to Concern about Salvation, and will lay hold upon the Discoveries of Sin, and that Faith which is not endeavouring to get the Soul in

which it dwells, more and more convinced of, and humbled for Sin, is to be suspected.

III. When Sin is held forth, and the Law preached, then others will shelter themselves under the Fig-leaf of their own *blameless Walk*. Come to some of these who have all their Days lived in a State of Estrangement and Alienation from GOD, and pose them, when they ly upon a Sick-bed, or a Death bed, as to their State; they will say, *they hope all is well*, they shall be saved, they never *did any body Ill*; and therefore they *never feared the Wrath of GOD*. Wo's me that there is any so grossly ignorant, in a Church that has been blessed with more clear and satisfying Discoveries of GOD's Mind and Will, than most Churches in the World. Ye say, ye have done no Man any Injury, and therefore ye will be saved, I *answer*, Ye have injured GOD, and therefore ye will be damn'd. Ye say ye have injured no Man; I *answer*, Ye understand not well what ye say, otherwise ye should not have the Confidence to talk at the Rate ye do. (1.) Ye have injured all with whom ye have convers'd, in whom ye are concern'd, in as far as ye have not laid out your self in paying the Debt ye ow them. Love is a Debt we ow to all, *Rom. xiii. 8.* and he that has never evidenced his Love to them, in a serious Concern about their Salvation, is extremely injurious to them, in as far as he detains from them that which is *unquestionably their Due*: And past all Peradventure, he that was never serious about his own Salvation, was never really concerned about the Salvation of others;

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others; and therefore has detained from them what was their undoubted Right. (2.) Didst thou never see thy Brother sin? No doubt thou hast. Well then, didst thou reprove him? I fear not. Yea, many of this Sort of Persons can, it may be, see their own Children, Wives, Servants, and nearest Relations, commit gross Acts of Sin, and yet never reprove them. Is it not so with many of you? I am sure ye cannot deny it. Well, is not this a real Injury done to that Persons ye should have reprov'd? 'Tis a *hating them in your Heart*. GOD himself says so, and sure his Judgment is according to Truth, *Lev. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: Thou shalt in any ways rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* In fine, with what Confidence dare ye say ye have done no Man any Injury, when by a Tract of Sin, ye have been doing the utmost ye could to bring down the Wrath of a Sin-revenging GOD upon your selves, and upon all who live with you in the same Society?

IV. Others, when pursued by the Discoveries of Sin, get in behind the *Church Privileges*, and think there to screen themselves from the Wrath of GOD. Thus it was with the Wretches spoken of by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in that vii Chap. of his Book; they did *steal, murder, commit Adultery, swear falsely, burn Incense unto Baal.* Well, the LORD threatens them with Wrath, bids them amend their Ways and their Doings: But they sat still secure and unconcern'd, never affected either with the Discovery of Sin, or

with Threatnings of Wrath. What is the Matter? Have the Men no Sense of Hazard at all? They could not altogether shut their Eyes upon the clear Discoveries the Prophet made of their Sins to them, or of that consequential Misery he did threaten them withal; but they sheltered themselves behind their Church Privileges, and they cry out to him, *The Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD are these, Ver. 4.* And I make no doubt but 'tis so with some of you. It may be ye reason as *Manoah* did in another Case, *If the LORD designed to damn us, he would not have given us Ordinances as he has done.* Now, I only offer two or three Things that will sufficiently expose the Weakness of this Defence, or hiding Place. And (1.) I say, Ye may indeed reason thus, GOD has established Gospel Ordinances, the *Signs of his Presence* amongst us; therefore he will save some. He will not bring the Means of Grace without *doing some Good* by them. Yet (2.) I say ye cannot thence infer that he will save you; for 1. Many who have had the Gospel Ordinances have been damned. 2. 'Tis not the having, but the improving of them that saves any. 3. To lean upon them is the worst Misimprovement of them possible, and therefore take Care that ye *trust not in lying Words, saying, The Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD are these.*

V. Others finding no Shelter from their Convictions here, betake themselves to their good Duties. We tell them, they are Sinners, and lay open to their Eyes their miserable and wretched Con-

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Condition and State : They turn their Eyes to their Duties, and, like the *Pharisee* spoken of by our Lord, *Luke xviii. 11.* they will stop the Mouth of Conscience, with an Enumeration of their Performances, whereby they excel others. True it is, will such an one say, *I have sinned*; but on the other Hand, *I am not guilty of gross Outbreakings, and scandalous Sins*; nay, more, *I am much and frequent in the Performance of the Duties of Religion, I pray, I fast, I communicate, and a great many other Things I do, and therefore I hope to get Heaven notwithstanding all my Sins.* O how natural is it for Man to prefer a *defenceless hiding Place* of his own Contrivance, to the *impregnable City of Refuge* contrived by infinite Wisdom and Grace, the *homespun Robe* of his own, to the *Heaven-wrought Robe of Christ's Righteousness*? Here many of you hide your selves; I pray, I read, I seek into GOD, and therefore *all's well*: A sad Conclusion! To this Plea I answer (1.) if ye should dissolve in Tears, pray till your Knees grow into the Ground, and give all ye have in Alms, and fast every Day; all this will not atone for one Sin. (2.) Your best Duties do but increase your Guilt. This the Church well saw, *Isa. lxiv. 6 We are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteousness are as filthy Rags.* (3.) Good Duties when rested on, have damn'd many, but never did, nor ever shall save any. To lean to them, is to say to the Work of our Hands, *Ye are our Gods*; a Sin that the LORD forbids and abominates.

VI. Ano-

VI. Another Sort of Persons, when Convictions get hold of them, and their Sin and Misery are plainly and clearly discovered to them, get in behind their good *Resolutions*, and thereby they shelter themselves. They resolve to consider of this Matter at a more *convenient* Season, like *Felix* who dismiss'd *Paul* when once he came to deal *closely* with him, and promis'd him a Hearing afterwards ; So do many, when they are almost convinced, they *dismiss* Convictions, and *promise* to hear them afterwards. Now, I shall address my self to such in a few serious exhortatory Questions. And (1.) I enquire at you, Is the Consideration of Sin and Misery, and of your *Escape* from it, a Business to be *delayed* ? Is there any Thing that ye can be concern'd about that deserves to be *preferred* to this ? Is there any Hazard like Damnation ? any Mercy comparable to Salvation from the Wrath of GOD ? If a Man gain a World and lose a Soul, is he profited by the *Exchange* ? (2.) Who is better Judge of the most convenient Occasion, GOD or ye ? He has determined the *present Opportunity* to be the best : *Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.* (3.) *When* art thou resolv'd to take under serious Consideration thy Sin and Misery, that now thou *shiftest* the Thoughts of ? Ye must surely say, that it will be some Time *after* this. But now I ask you, What *Certainty* have ye of such a *Time* ? And what *Certainty* have ye that ye shall *then* have the *Means* that are necessary in order to this End ? I believe ye dare not say that ye are *sure* of either. (4.) Sure

I am some who in the same Manner have made many fair *Promises and Resolutions*, have thereby cheated themselves out of their Souls. But a

VII. Sort get in behind their own *Ignorance*, and think to shelter themselves there. They promise themselves Safety, tho' they be not concern'd about Salvation, because they are but ignorant. God, say they, may deal severely with others that *know better Things*; but for me, I hope he will have Mercy upon me, because *I know no better*. With what astonishing Confidence have we heard some plead this? *Ye say ye are ignorant, and therefore God will have Mercy upon you; I say ye are ignorant, and therefore GOD will have no Mercy upon you, Isa. xxvii. 11.* Ye are ignorant, but whose Fault is it? Has not GOD given you the Means of Knowledge? Has not the Light of the glorious Gospel shi'd clearly about you? Have not others got *Knowledge* by the Use of the very same Means which ye have neglected and slighted? This is a common *Excuse* for Sins, but a most *unhappy one* as ever any meddled withal; for (1.) GOD has expressly told us that ignorant People shall be damned, *2 Thess. i. 8, 9.* (2.) He has told us that Ignorance will be the *Ground* of the Sentence. This is the *Condemnation* of ignorant Sinners, that they love Darkness rather than Light, *John iii. 19.* Nor will it excuse you to tell, that ye want Time; for (1.) all other Things should give Place to this. *Seek first the Kingdom of GOD, and the Righteousness thereof*, and other Things will come in their own Room and Place. (2.) Others have had as little Time as ye have, who yet have taken
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Care of their Souls, and have got the Knowledge of GOD. (3.) Ye lose as much Time upon Trifles, or doing nothing, as might bring you to a competent Measure of the Knowledge of these Things which do belong to your Peace, were it but frugally managed: So that this will be found to be a weak Defence, try it who will. And yet here a great many shelter themselves, and that Two Ways. (1.) Hereby a great many are not capable to understand what we speak to them about their Sin or their Danger, and so we have no Access to them to convince them. (2.) Others do think that their Ignorance will atone for their other Faults; and this is a Fancy so deeply rooted in the Thoughts of many, that nothing is like to cure them of it till the Appearance of the Lord Jesus, for their Destruction who know not GOD, do it.

VIII. There is one Defence more whereby some put by convincing Discoveries of Sin, and that is, *by comparing themselves with others*. When 'tis born close home upon their Consciences, that they are in an Estate of extreme Danger; then they say, Well, one Thing I am sure of, 'tis like to fare no worse with me than with others; and if I be damn'd, many others will be so besides me. O desperate, and yet common Defence!

Thou sayst, if thou be damn'd, then many others are like to be so: Well, it shall indeed be so, many shall indeed perish eternally as ye heard before: But, 1. What will this contribute to your Advantage? I make no doubt, but *Company* will contribute exceedingly to the Blessedness of

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of the Saints above : But I cannot see what Solace or Comfort the Damned can have from their Companions ; nay, past all Peradventure, this will inhanche their Misery, their Case being such as can admit of no Alleviation. (2.) Knowest thou, O Wretch, what thou sayst, when thou talkest at that Rate ? It is plainly to say, I will hazard the Issue, be it what it will ; than which nothing can be more extravagant and foolish : Art thou willing to hazard eternal Wrath ? Can ye dwell with everlasting Burnings ? Can ye dwell with devouring Flames ? If there be any such Wretch here, as is resolved to hold on at this Rate, and hazard the Issue, I have a few Questions to put to him : Is there any Thing in the World, worth the seeking after, that ye would desire to be sure of ? If there be any such Thing, then I pose you on it, if there be any Thing comparable to Salvation ? If ye say, there is ; then I enquire further, Is there any Thing that will go with you after this Life is done ? Is there any Thing that will make up your Loss, if ye lose your Souls ? What will be able to relieve you under the Extremity of the Wrath of a Sin-revenging GOD ? Again, when ye say, ye will hazard the Issue, then I desire to know of you, do not ye think it as probable, that ye shall be damned, as that ye shall be saved ? Sure ye have Reason to think so indeed. A Person so little concern'd about Salvation, must think God has a very small Esteem of Salvation, if he throw it away upon such as care not for it. Finally, since ye are likely to be damned in the Issue, have

have ye ever thought what Damnation imports? I believe not. I shall only refer you to that short Account of it, which the final Doom of impenitent Sinners gives of it, in that xxv of *Matth.* 41. *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

I cannot now enter upon the Consideration of many other Pretences, whereby Sinners shelter themselves from Convictions: Only I wish ye may rivet upon your Hearts Three Truths, which will help to preserve you from laying Weight upon them. (1.) Be perswaded that there are but *few that will be saved*. Christ has said so, and who dare give him the Lie? (2.) Believe it, they who shall be saved, shall not be saved in an *easy Way*. *The righteous are scarcely saved*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 18. (3.) Ye are to endeavour a solid Conviction, that there's no Salvation for you but in the *Gospel Way*, *Acts* iv. 12. Understand and believe these Three Truths, and this will be a Mean to preserve you from a Reliance upon Things that cannot profit. And this for the *first* Word we design'd, to such of you as are not convinc'd of Sin and Misery. I shall pass this, and in the

Second Place, to such of you as are not yet awakened, as are not yet convinc'd of your lost and undone State, I say, *ye have Reason to fear that ye shall never be awakened and convinced*. There is Ground to fear, that Christ has said to you, *Sleep on*: And if it be so, then the Thundrings of the Law, the still and calm Voice of the Gospel, the most sweet and charming Providences, yea, the most terrible Threatnings of Providence shall

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shall never be able to open your Eyes, or make you consider and lay to Heart the *Things that belong to your Peace*; but ye shall sleep on in your Security, till the Wrath of GOD come upon you to the uttermost. But it may possibly be, that some whose Case this is, shall *say or think*, or at least carry as if they thought there was no Danger of this at all. But I assure such, whatever their Thoughts may be, there is great Hazard of this; for

(1.) GOD has taken much Pains upon you already, to bring you to a Sense of your sad State and Condition; but he has not dealt so with others. He has not dealt so with many of the heathen Nations; he has not dealt so with many who have been taken away suddenly after their Refusal of the first Offer of the Gospel; he has not dealt so with not a few others who have had the Gospel Light quickly taken from them upon their Refusal of it. As for the Way of GOD's Dealing with the *Heathen*, there is no Place to doubt of it; and that the LORD has not dealt so with, or been at so great Expence either of *Time or Means* with others, is plain in your own Experience. Tell me, O Sinners, Have not many been snatched away by Death, from the Advantage and Use of the Ordinances, since the LORD began to deal with you in order to your Conviction? Sure, few of you can deny it: And that the LORD did allow others a shorter Time of the Ordinances, is no less plain from manifold Evidences, both in Scripture, and in the Experience of the Church in all Ages. Ye have had more Time than *Capernaum* and many other

other Places where *Christ* preached, in the Days of his personal Ministry upon Earth.

(2.) Ye have Reason to fear this terrible Issue, if ye consider the Way that the LORD has taken with you. He has not rested in a general Discovery of either your Sin or Danger; but has dealt particularly with every one of you, as it were by Name and Sirname: He has spoken particularly to you, by his Word, and by his Providences. In his Name we have dealt particularly with young and old of you: And by his Providences he has been no less particular. What Person, what Family has not, either in themselves, or in their Relations, felt the Stroke of GOD's Hand? which tells all upon whom it lights, that they have *sinn'd, and come short of the Glory of GOD*. I believe, there is scarce one in this House who has not smarted this way. So that scarce is there one amongst us who has not withstood particular Dealings of GOD for his Conviction; and this is a sufficient Ground to fear that we may never be convinc'd; since all the Ways that GOD is wont to take, are either general, when he deals with a Person in common, by a Proposal of such Things as lay open the Sin and Misery of all in general; or particular, when he makes a special Application of the general Charge, either by his Word, or by his Providence, and says, as *Nathan* did, *Thou art the Man*: And what can be done more for your Conviction in the way of Means?

(3.) He has not only us'd these Ways and Means mentioned, but has *waited long* upon you in the Use of the Means, even from the Morning of your

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your Day till now. Many, if not all of you, have had *Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line, here a little and there a little.* Christ has risen up early, and has dealt with you, by sending one Messenger after another, one Preaching after another, one Providence after another, and yet ye are not convinc'd and awakened. This suggests great Grounds to fear the Issue, if it be considered,

(4.) That the Spirit of GOD, tho' he may long strive with Sinners, yet will not *always* strive with them, *Gen. vi. 4. And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh*; as if the LORD had said, I have long dealt with these Men, by an awakning Ministry, by awakning Dispensations, by the inward Motions of my Spirit, by Checks of their own Conscience, to convince them of their Sin and Danger, and to reform them; but now I find all Means ineffectual, they are entirely corrupt; therefore I will convince them no more: I will spare them till they fill up their Cup, and be satined against the Day of Slaughter; but will never more convince them, or endeavour their Conviction. And who can tell, but the LORD has this Day pronounced the like Sentence against the unconvinc'd Sinners of *Ceres*, or some of them? Yonder is a People with whom I have long striven, by the Word, by Providences, by Motions of my Spirit, and by secret Checks of Conscience, and yet they are not awakened, are not convinced: Therefore I will strive no longer with them; I will either take them away with a Deluge of Wrath, as I did the old World; or I will take my Ordina-

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nances from them, as I have done from other Churches ; or I will give my Servants a Commission to make their Ears heavy, their Hearts fat, and their Eyes blind ; and I will pronounce the barren Fig-tree's Curse against them. And that all this is not a mere empty Bugbear, set up on purpose to fright you, will appear evident, if it be considered

(5.) That this is the *stated Measure*, the ordinary Way, that the LORD has laid down, for proceeding with Persons in that Case ; as ye will see if ye turn over to that terrible Scripture, *Heb. vi. 7, 8. The Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth Blessing from GOD ; but that which beareth Thorns and Briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing, whose End is to be burned.* Here is the stated and ordinary Rule of GOD's Procedure with Sinners, who live under a Gospel-dispensation ; and that both with such as improve and with such as mis-improve it : The Way that GOD takes with the first Sort, the Improvers of it, is this ; he gives them the Means, his Word and Ordinances, which, like the Rain, come down from Heaven, and have a fructifying Efficacy, when they fall upon good Ground ; and, upon their bringing forth good Fruit, call'd Fruit that's meet for the Use of him who dresseth it, he blesteth them. On the other Hand, we have the Carriage of GOD toward the rest, and their Carriage toward him, plainly enough represented unto us ; which I shall set before you in a few Particulars. *First, GOD gives them, as well as others, frequent Showers*

Showers ; he gives them sometimes the Means, and that in great Plenty. *Secondly.* The Generality of them use the Means ; both the one Sort and the other is suppos'd to drink in the Rain ; for there is no doubt that these who openly reject the Counsel of GOD against themselves, as the *Pharisees* and *Scribes* did of old, *Luke vii. 30.* shall be burnt up with unquenchable Fire. *Thirdly.* Tho' this Sort of Persons we are now speaking of, drink in the Rain, as did the other ; yet herein are they differenced, they bring not forth Fruit meet for the Use of him by whom they were thus watered ; but on the contrary, they bring forth Briers and Thorns. That is plainly, the Discoveries of Sin did not convince them, the Discoveries of Danger did not awaken them, the Influences of Grace did not quicken them, but rather made them more stupid, more dead and unconcern'd. *Fourthly.* Upon this account the LORD *rejects* them ; that is, he either gives over dealing with them entirely, or at least withdraws his Blessing from the Means. *Fifthly.* During the Time of his Forbearance, they are *nigh unto Cursing* ; there is nothing to keep the Curse of GOD from them ; 'tis fast upon its Approach to them ; they ly open to it, and are destin'd to the Curse. Therefore, in the *Sixth Place*, he *burns* such in the End. This, O Sinners, is the ordinary Way of the LORD's Dealing with Sinners. And now see and consider your own Concernment in this ; The LORD, as was said before, has often rain'd down upon you ; ye have pretended to

receive these Showers, have been waiting upon the Means ; but have not brought forth *good Fruit* ; nay, on the contrary, ye have brought forth *Briers and Thorns* : What Reason have ye then to dread the Consequence ? Have ye not Reason to fear that ye are *rejected*, and so *nigh unto Cursing*, and that therefore your End is to be *burned* ? And that all this may not appear groundless, I offer this to your Consideration in the

(6.) Place : As GOD has laid down the Rule just now mentioned, as that by which he has walk'd and will walk with all to whom he gives the Gospel, I mean for ordinary ; so in his Providence we find him dealing accordingly with Sinners. I shall only lay before you Two or Three Instances of GOD's Dealing with Sinners according to this Rule. The *First* is that of the *old World*. The LORD did deal long and particularly with them, by the Preaching of *Noah*, in order to their Conviction : They were not convinc'd, but rather grew worse and worse ; whereupon the LORD rejected them, gave over striving with them : And tho' he spared them, *Gen. vi. 3.* yet it was not on a Design of Mercy, but only to suffer them to fill up their Cup, that they might be without Excuse, and that their Condemnation might be the more terrible. The *Second* Instance, is that of the *Church of the Jews* in our LORD's Time. He preach'd to them, and endeavoured their Conviction ; but they were not convinced ; therefore he rejects them : And tho' they had a While's Respite, yet the Things that did belong to their Peace were

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now eternally hid from their Eyes, *Luke xix. 41, 42:* as he himself tells them ; and therefore they had nothing to look for, but Judgment and fiery Indignation. In fine, I might to the same Purpose set before your Eyes many Instances in the *Gospel Church* since the *Days of Christ*, wherein the LORD has exactly followed the same Measures. Now, tell me, O Sinners, have ye not Reason to fear from all that has been laid before you, that ye shall sleep on, and never be convinc'd, never awakened : But this is not all, for we must tell you

3. O unconvinced Sinners, after all the Pains that has been taken upon you for your Salvation, *'tis highly probable that ye shall never be saved.* We have just now laid before you many Reasons we have to fear, that ye who have shut your Eyes so long upon the Discoveries of your Sin and Danger, shall never get them opened ; and if they never be opened, then I may say that, as sure as GOD lives, not a Soul of you shall be saved : For (1.) If ye be not convinc'd, if ye get not your Eyes opened, to see your Sin and Misery, ye will never lay Salvation to Heart, as appears from what has been already discours'd to you at great Length. (2.) If ye lay not Salvation to Heart, then sure ye will never *seek after*, or look to a Saviour for Salvation. Such as think they see, will not value Eye-salve, such as think themselves rich enough, will not look after Gold tried in the Fire ; such as see no Hazard of Damnation, will not seek after Salvation. (3.) If ye be not seeking after a Saviour, then tho' he come to you, yet will ye not receive him : Nay, ye will

reject him, and that with Contempt. And indeed it cannot otherwise be : Who would not with Scorn reject the Offers of a Physician, that should press upon him healing Medicines, when he was not sensible of any Disease ? He is a Fool that offers a Pardon to a Man who is not condemn'd, or his Hand to help up a Man who is not fallen, or Water to wash a Man that is not defil'd : And such an one is *Christ* in the Eyes of all that are not convinc'd. Such an one really he is in your Eyes ; and ye will be sure to treat him as such. (4.) The necessary Consequence of this is, ye must be damn'd ; ye cannot be sav'd ; for there is no other Way of obtaining eternal Salvation, but only by *Jesus Christ* ; for there is *no other Name given under Heaven among Men, whereby Sinners can be saved, but only that of Jesus Christ, Acts iv. 12.* And Damnation is the eternal Lot of all them that reject him, *Mark xvi. 16.* But further,

4. We say, Wo to you, O stupid, hard-hearted, and unconvinced Sinners ; for if ye shall be damned, *your Damnation will be most terrible, your State will be unspeakably miserable.* And this will appear plain to any who seriously shall think upon it ; for (1.) Damnation at the best is most terrible. This we did make appear to you not long ago : And indeed tho' we had spoken nothing, the Thing speaks for it self. What is terrible, if eternal Burnings be not so ? *Who can dwell with devouring Flames ? who can dwell with everlasting Burnings ? Who can abide the Heat of that Tophet that's prepared of old, that's made large and deep,*

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deep, and has, for its *Pile, Fire and much Wood,* and the *Breath of the Almighty* like a *Stream of Brimstone* kindling it. The coldest Place there will be hot; the most tolerable Place will be intolerable: And therefore the Case of all who go there is terrible. But (2.) your Condition, O miserable Sinners, will be more terrible than that of many who shall be there. *Christ* says, *Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida;* for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Ashes: But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this Day: But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for thee, Matth. xi. 21, 24. In which remarkable Denunciation of Wrath against those Sinners whom our Lord had endeavoured to convince, and yet were not awakened, 'tis plain, *First.* That some shall have hotter and more intolerable Places in Hell than others. *Secondly.* That they on whom most Pains has been bestowed will have the hottest Place. According to this Rule of the divine Procedure with Sinners, I shall now proceed, and lay before you your Case. I say unto you, O unconvinced Sinners in the Congregation of Ceres, before whom your Sin and Misery has so fully of late been laid open, your Hell will be hotter than that of many others. Wo

unto you, for it will be more intolerable than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. They never sinn'd against the Means of Grace, as ye have done. Upon this very account, when our *Lord* sends forth his Disciples, *Matth. x.* he tells them, *That it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the Day of Judgment, than for such as should refuse them.* See *Verses* the 14, 15. Now this is the Case with you: The heathen World's Hell will be hot indeed; but your Furnace will be heated *seven Times more.* Again, Wo unto you, for your Hell will be more intolerable than that of *Capernaum*, *Bethsaida* or *Chorazin*; nay, than that of the Soldiers that crucify'd *Christ*, and of the *Jews* that condemned him, for they only sinned against *Christ* in his Estate of Humiliation; but ye have rejected him, now when he is exalted upon high, and seated at the right Hand of GOD. Wo unto you, it will be more intolerable for you, than for those who live in many other Churches, where the Gospel is corrupted with a perverse Addition of human Inventions and Doctrines, that are alien from it: For ye sin against the clear Light of the Gospel, not darkned by the Clouds of false Doctrines. Once more, Wo unto you of this Congregation, if ye be found Rejecters of the Gospel, as certainly ye will if ye continue unconvinced; for your Hell will be more intolerable than that of many others in *Scotland*, who have not had that Pains taken upon them which ye have had, who have not had these frequent and clear Discoveries of Sin and Duty, which ye have had by one of *Christ's* Servants after another

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ther. Now tell me, O Wretches, can ye think upon your own Case without Horror? Sure, if ye understood it, ye would not, ye could not do it. But

5. I say further to you, who shut your Eyes upon your Sin and Misery, notwithstanding all that has been said for your awakening, *If ye perish*, and perish ye shall if ye be not convinced, then *your Destruction is intirely of your selves*. And O how galling, how cutting will this be to you eternally? That it is, I make appear against you thus. Where can ye lay the Blame of it? (1.) Dare ye say that ye *wanted the Means* of Salvation? No, this ye cannot, ye dare not say; for if ye shall so do, we are all here Wirnesses for GOD against you; nay, your own Consciences shall arise and fly in your Faces, and force you, though unwilling, to own that ye have had the Means. (2.) Dare ye say that the Means are *not sufficient* to the End for which they are offered? No, I am sure there shall not be one that ever had them, who shall dare to charge them with Insufficiency. And if any of you should arrive at that Height of intolerable Insolence and Impudence as to do it, it were easy to stop their Mouths: For GOD might ask you, when standing at his Tribunal, *First*. How do ye know them to be insufficient, since ye were never at the Pains to try them? *Next*. He might stop your Mouth thus, Behold here upon my Right Hand that innumerable Company out of all Kindreds, Tongues and Nations: And how were they saved? If ye should go to them all, and ask them one by one, would they not all with one Voice

Voice answer to your eternal Shame and Confusion, that by the Use these very Means you had, but neglected, they were saved. (3.) If yet ye will not see that all the Blame of your Destruction will come only to your own Door, then I ask you, on whom will ye lay the Blame? Dare ye lay it upon any other but your selves, with any tolerable Shadow of Ground? I know ye dare not. To blame the Devil, or the World, is downright Nonsense; for 'tis Salvation from them that ye was to seek? and to tell that these are the Cause of your Ruin, when ye had Relief against them offered, is vain; for it may easily be ask'd at a Person who has lived under the Gospel, and gives Satan or the World the Blame of his Ruin, Was there not Deliverance from Satan and the World offered to you? Were not the Means mentioned sufficient? This will eternally acquit them as to your Destruction, and lodge it upon your selves as the principal Cause of it, which is all we plead; for we do not exeme them from a Share in the Guilt of it. Now, this being incontestably evident, it remains that either *Christ*, or his *Ministers* are chargeable with your Damnation, or that ye your selves only are so.

As for our blessed Lord and Master, we offer now to undertake his Vindication against any that shall dare to accuse him. We have abundance to speak in his behalf; and are resolved to ascribe Righteousness to our Maker. In his Vindication, I appeal to your own Consciences in a few Particulars. (1.) Is he not indeed a sufficient Saviour, one able to save to the uttermost

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all that come unto GOD through him? Deny it you dare not; for this is the Attestation of the glorious Cloud of Witnesses, who all have, by Faith in his Name, got above the Reach of Sin, Death and Hell. (2.) Did ever any of you come to him, and get a Refusal? Produce your Instances of this Sort, if ye can. We dare boldly, in our Lord's Name, give a Defiance to Earth or Hell, to produce one Instance of this Sort. (3.) Has he not *allowed*, nay, *invited*, *intreated*, nay, *commanded* you to come unto him that ye might be saved? If ye shall deny this, the Word of GOD, the Servants of GOD are Witnesses against you. (4.) Has he not waited long upon you? Has he not given you Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line? And now, to conclude, I pose you on it, what could he have done more to you that he has not done?

But it may be ye will lay it to our Door, and say, tho' *Christ* did his Part, yet his Servants have not done theirs; they have not given you fair Warning. As for their Vindication I answer a few Things; and I say (1.) Tho' they may be guilty, and conceal, or at least fail of Faithfulness in their Duty, yet your Damnation is of your selves: For ye have the Word of GOD that's plain, that's full, in its Representation of your Sin and Misery; and had you paid a due Regard to that, ye could not have miss'd of Salvation: Therefore yet your Destruction is of your selves. But (2.) we refuse the Charge of your Blood, and tell you that ye have destroyed your selves, if ye sleep on in
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your Sins. And for our own Vindication, I put a few Things home to you : Have we not plainly told you your Sin and Danger ? Have we not done it frequently ? Have we not been particular in dealing with Young and Old of you ? Have we not been pressing, in order to your Conviction ? We have told you with Earnestness, both your Sin and Danger. We have looked from our Watch-tower through the Prospect of the Word of GOD, and have seen the Wrath of GOD ready to seize you ; and we have not conceal'd his Righteousness within us. And now, the LORD, the righteous Judge, be Witness betwixt you and us, for we have done as much as will free us of your Blood. Indeed we cannot deny our selves to be Sinners ; and must own that we have sinned, even with respect to you : But this will not make your Blood to be charged upon us ; since, in order to our Exoneration as to that, 'tis only required we give you Warning of your Danger ; and if ye be slain sleeping, ye are to blame. There is one Word more I have to say to you in the

6th Place ; and then I shall leave you. What have we to do more with you ? If ye comply not with the first Part of our Message, ye will be sure to refuse the second. *Christ* will be refused by you, and we will seem to you like them that mock. But whatever Use ye make of it, we shall proceed in our Work ; And if we prove not the *Savour of Life* unto you, we shall prove the *Savour of Death* ; for we are a sweet *Savour unto GOD in them that are saved, and in them*

them that perish, and if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, 2 Cor. iv. 3. I come now,

*Secondly. To speak a Word to such as are awakened, and are saying, with the convinced Jay-
lor in the Text, What shall I do to be saved? and to you we say,*

1. *Bless the LORD, who has opened your Eyes. Ye were naturally as much inclined to sleep on as others; and 'tis only the distinguishing Goodness of GOD that has made you to differ.*

2. *Study to keep your Eyes open.* If ye shut them again, and lose Convictions, then ye may never recover them again. If ye quench the Spirit, 'tis hard to say but the *Issue* may prove fatal to you. If GOD, being provok'd by your stifling Convictions, shall give over dealing with you, I may say, Wo unto you, for ye are undone eternally. And that ye have got your Eyes opened in some Measure, to discover your Hazard, will be so far from mending the Matter, that it will make it much worse; it will put an Accent upon your Sin, and likewise upon your Punishment.

3. *Endeavour to improve the Discoveries ye have got of Sin, and seek not only to keep your Eyes open, but to have them further opened.* The more clear the Sight of Sin is, which ye get, the more welcome will ye make the Gospel-tender of Mercy and Relief, the more sincerely and heartily will ye close with it.

4. *Would ye indeed be saved? then take the Advice in the Text, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* This leads me to
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that which I did principally design in the Choice of this Subject ; therefore I shall, if the LORD will, insist upon it at length, because it is the very Sum and Substance of the Gospel, that which comprises all the rest.

We have hitherto represented your Case by Nature, as ye are under Sin ; and have hinted shortly at your Case, as under the Influences of the Spirit in Conviction: Now we shall proceed to a Discovery of the Gospel Relief, that's provided by infinite Wisdom, for such as are awakened to a Discovery of their lost and undone State ; and that lies before us in this 31 Verse. Ye may remember, that when we did open to you the Context, we did refer the Explication of this Verse, till such Time as we had ended the former. This being now done, I shall briefly open the Words, and then draw thence some such comprehensive Truth as may give Ground to discourse of that which we have principally in our Eye.

The Words contain a Direction given to the distressed and awakened *Jaylor* : And in them we may take notice.

1. Of the Person to whom the Direction is given ; and, as was just now said, he is an awakened and convinced Sinner. This is the Gospel Method ; it proposes its Remedy, not to these who are whole and well, in their own Eyes, but to such as are diseased. Christ is tendred to such as need him, and are sensible that they do so. The Foundation of the Gospel is laid in Conviction of Sin. Hence it is, that we find Gospel Ministers begin their Work here ; of which

which we have many eminent and notable Instances in the Scripture. *John the Baptist*, whose Business it was to make Way for *Christ*, and prepare Sinners for entertaining the Call of the Gospel, begins his Ministry with Conviction, with preaching of Sin to his Hearers. *Repent*, saith he, *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*. He smartly rebukes such as came to him, and fully unfolds to them their Need of a Saviour. There were two Sorts of People that came to him, as we read in that iii of *Matthew*. The ordinary Sort of People, and the more refined Sort, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; and he deals with them accordingly. The more gross Sort he directly presses to Repentance, in consideration of the Approach of the Gospel. Their Sins went beforehand into Judgment. Matters of Fact they could not deny; and therefore he presses them to load their Consciences with a Sense of them. The more refined Sort of Sinners he takes another Way of dealing with; he calls them *Vipers*, thereby pointing them full as bad, if not worse than the common Sort, and beats them from the strong Holds they were wont to shelter themselves in from the Storms of an awakened Conscience: *Think not to say within your selves, We have Abraham to our Father, &c.* This was their ordinary Relief; and this he discovers the Vanity of, in order to prepare them for the Entertainment of the Gospel. The same Course was followed by the Apostles, *Acts* ii. The same Method did our Lord use with the Apostle *Paul* in *Acts* ix. and this Method have we endeavoured to follow in dealing with you: We have laid Sin before you; and

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'tis for the sake of such as are convinced among you, that we have entred upon the Consideration of this Relief, that's only suited to convinced Sinners: But

2. In the Words we may take Notice of the *Persons who propose this Relief* to this awakened Sinner, viz. *Paul and Silas*. In reference to them there are only *two* Things I observe amongst many, the one, That they were Persons who had a Commission from *Christ* to preach the Gospel; the other, That they once had been in the same Case themselves: Which Two, when they meet in one, help to fit a Man to be a complete Minister; one who in his Measure will be capable to answer the Character given of *Christ*, that *he had the Tongue of the Learn'd to speak a Word in Season to weary Souls*.

3. We may take Notice of the *Way wherein they propose this Direction*: And here 'tis remarkable, that they do it *speedily*, they do it *plainly*. No sooner is the Question proposed, but 'tis answered. One would have thought, that it had been the Apostles Wisdom, to capitulate with him, and hold him in Suspence, till such Time as he should engage to contribute for their Escape: But they would not do so, but presently offer him Relief; having themselves been acquaint with the Terrors of the LORD, they know how uneasy it would be for him to continue in that miserable Perplexity, nay, how cruel it would be not to do their utmost for his speedy Relief. They minded more the Sinner's eternal Salvation, than their own temporal Safety. They had greater Regard

gard to the Glory of *Christ*, than to their own Safety. They were more concerned to satisfy a poor convinced and dejected Sinner, than their own private Grudges. And this they do, not by proposing the Gospel in such a dark and obscure Way as might amuse and confound; but in so fair and plain a Way, as might be understood easily by the poor distressed Man.

4. In the Words we are to notice the *Direction it self*, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. In which again we are to observe three Things; the *Duty* pointed to, the *Person* whom it respects, and the *Way* how it respects him. The *Duty* pointed to is, *Believe*; that is, act Faith upon, receive and rest upon *Christ*, look unto him. All these Words signify exactly one and the same Thing, as we shall see anon, if the *LORD* will. The *Person* whom this Faith respects, is the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Here we have a *threefold Title* given to him. He is called the *LORD*, which points at his Authority and Dominion. He is Lord over all Things and Persons, because he did create, and doth still uphold them: And he is so in a peculiar Manner, as he is the Redeemer of the Church, for whose Behoof all Things are put into his Hands, he being made *Head over all Things* to the Church. Again, he is called *Jesus*, to point at the Design of his Lordship and Dominion: As he is exalted to be a *Prince*, so is he likewise to be a *Saviour*. Nay, the Design of his Advancement to that Dominion which belongs to him as *Mediator*, is to fit him to be a *Saviour*; which is the pro-

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per Import of the Name *Jesus*, according to the Scripture Account of it, *Thou shalt call his Name Jesus, because he shall save his People from their Sins*, Matth. i. 21. In fine, he is called *Christ*, i. e. Anointed, because he is anointed, designed, and furnished of GOD to be a *Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance and Remission of Sins*, Acts v. 31. The last Thing we did notice in the Direction it self, is the *Nature* of that *Respect* which this Faith has to *Christ*: 'Tis not said, *Believe the Lord Jesus Christ*, but *believe [on] him, or [in] him*. 'Tis not simply to give Credit to his Word, and take as Truth whatever he has said; but it is to rely on him, to put our Trust in him, as one that's able to save such as come unto GOD through him.

5. In the Words we are to observe the *Encouragement* that's given, to enage to a Compliance with this Direction: And this is twofold, *Particular, thou shalt be saved*; and *more general, and thy House*. In the

First. We have two three Things worthy of our Notice, (1.) The Thing that's promised, and that is *Salvation*, the very Thing that the Man was seeking. (2.) The Order in which it is to be had; *believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved*. (3.) There is the *certain Connection* betwixt the one and the other; *thou shalt be saved, if once thou believe*. Where, by the by, we cannot but take Notice of the different Influence of the *Arminian* Doctrine of Justification, and that of the *Apostles* Doctrine, upon the Comfort of awakened Sinners. Had *Paul* said to him, *Believe on the Lord Jesus*; and if ye shall hold

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out in Faith to the End, then ye shall be saved; if ye hold your Will right, then all shall be well. If, I say, the Apostle had made his Proposal so, the poor Man might have lien still upon the Ground, and trembled all his Days; since this would have given him, at best, but a may be, for his eternal Salvation, and Escape from eternal Misery. But here there is a Ground for present and abiding Comfort; *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* The

Second Branch of the Encouragement is *general*, and *thy House* shall be saved. Which is not so to be understood, as if hereby it were promised that their Salvation should absolutely depend upon his Belief: For his Faith could not save them; since the Scripture is express, that he that believeth not, every particular Person who doth not believe, shall be damned; and upon the other Hand that every particular Person that believes shall be saved, tho' there should not one more believe. But the Meaning of the Words I shall offer to you shortly thus: When 'tis added, *and thy House*, this Expression imports, (1.) That all his House had need of Salvation, as well as himself. One might possibly think, as for that rude Fellow, who treated the Servants of *Christ* so ill, he has need to be saved; but his innocent Children are guilty of nothing that can endanger their eternal Happiness; but hereby the Apostles intimate that they needed Salvation as well as he. (2.) It imports the *Commonness* of this Direction; as if the Apostles had said, This Direction is not such as is peculiar to such great, notorious, and flagitious

gitious Sinners as thou hast been ; but 'tis the common Road wherein others walk toward Happiness : There is one Way for you and your House to be saved in. (3.) It imports the *Extent* of this Remedy : As if they had said, This is not only sufficient to reach and benefit you ; but 'tis such as may reach all in your House, and they may have the same Advantage as ye may have. (4.) It imports the *Certainty* of Salvation to them upon the same Terms. As if the Apostles had said, And let thy House believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and they likewise shall be saved. (5.) It imports this much, That hereby his Family should obtain some *special Advantages* in order to their Salvation.

Now because I design not to speak any more of this Part of the Text, I shall here mention some of these Advantages, which the *Taylor's* Children or House had by his Faith, and consequently which the Children of every Believer has by the Faith of their Parents. Amongst many such Advantages, the few following ones are remarkable. (1.) Hereby such Children are taken in within the Covenant ; for the *Promise*, says the Apostle, *Acts ii. 39. is to you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD shall call.* They are allowed hereby to have their Names particularly mentioned in the Promise. This is the Advantage which Church Members have beyond others, who are not yet taken within the Covenants, nor admitted to these Ordinances which are a Badge of their Reception. The

Gospel Call says in the general to all, If ye believe ye shall be saved ; but it, as it were, names every one that's baptized, and says in particular to him, O Man, thou who art taken within the Covenant, I say to thee, as it were by Name, Thou shalt be saved, if thou believe : And this is much more confirming than the other. (2.) The Children of real Believers have this Advantage, That they have their *Parents pleading for them at the Throne of Grace*, which many Time has availed much, in order to their Salvation, tho' the Lord sees not meet always to hear Parents in behalf of their Children. If he did always so, then possibly it might prove a Snare both to them and to their Children, and might lead them into a dangerous Mistake, as if GOD's Grace were not so free as it is ; but that many Times they are heard this Way, is Encouragement enough to engage all Parents to pray for their Children. (3) The Children of godly Parents have their *Counsel and Instruction*, which is of use to engage them to Religion, and to bring them to Acquaintance with *Christ* : And of how much Influence this is, the wise Man tells us, *Train up a Child in the Way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Prov. xxii.6.* that is, ordinarily he will not do so. (4.) The Children of believing Parents, they have their Parents *good Example* ; and this many Times has more Influence than Precept and Instruction : Hence it is that we find the Apostle *Peter* exhorting Wives to a holy Walk, that their unbelieving Husbands might be won by their Conversation. *Ye Wives*, says he, *be sub-*

ject to your own Husbands, that if any obey not the Word, they also may, without the Word, be won by the Conversation of the Wives, while they behold your chaste Conversation coupled with Fear, 1 Pet. iii. 1,

2. Faith made visible in a holy Walk, has a most attracting and engaging Appearance; 'tis beautiful to an high Degree. (5.) Hereby Children likewise have the Advantage of the Ordinances, which are the Means of Salvation. Godly Parents will take Care both to bring their Children to the Ordinances, and to bring the Ordinances to them. (6.) To add no more to this Purpose, the Children of Believers have this Advantage as they are theirs, that GOD has a particular Respect to them; which we find him expressing upon several Occasions to the Children of his Servants.

Since, as I said before, I design not to return again to this Part of the *Verse*, I cannot but apply this Truth, That the Children or House of a Believer has great Advantages by his believing in order to their Salvation: And this I shall do in a few Words to four Sorts of Persons, (1.) Believers. (2.) Their Children. (3.) Unbelievers. (4.) Their Children.

To the *first* Sort I say only a few Words. O Believers, is it so that your Children as well as ye your selves have so many Advantages in order to their Salvation? Then, (1.) Bless the LORD who has given you Faith, which not only is the Spring of innumerable Advantages to your selves, but also entails so many upon your very Houses. (2.) Bless the LORD, and be thankful for the Extent of the Covenant; that it is
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so wide as to reach not only your selves, but even your Children. It had been much Mercy had GOD given you your Souls for a Prey, tho' he had never given you the least Prospect of Mercy to your Offspring. (3.) Take Care that your Children lose none of these Advantages by your Negligence: Some of them, as ye have heard, are of such a Nature that depends not only upon the being of Grace in the Parents, but upon its Exercise. If ye live not holily and tenderly before them, ye may lay a Stumbling-block in their Way, which may cost you dear. The Negligence of some godly Parents this way, hath been heavy to them, when they came to die, and sometimes even before. (4.) Do not quarrel GOD, or repine, if after all your Children shall fall short of Salvation. If ye have acquit yourselves faithfully, then ye have and may have Peace, tho' they prove final Misimprovers of their own Mercies. *Christ* has nowhere promised that they shall be all saved: The Word of GOD gives a contrary Account of the Matter; *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, Rom. ix. 13.*

Secondly. Are there here any who are the Children of Believers? Then to such I say, (1) Ye have great Advantages, and therefore have an eminent Call to Thankfulness. Bless GOD that ye have religious Parents. Many have found it not a little relieving to them in their Straits and Fears, that they could say, that they were early devoted to GOD by their Parents, and that they had early Access to know GOD,

and had Prayers early put up for them. (2.) Rest not upon these Advantages ; for your Parents Faith will not save you. Think not to say within yourselves, We have a Believer to our Father, and therefore all will be well. *Esau* had such an one to his Father, and yet went to Hell ; and not a few others have gone the same Way. Nay (3.) I say to you, If ye shall be damned, all these Advantages will be Witnesses against you. Your Fathers devoted you to GOD, but ye devoted your selves to Satan ; your Fathers prayed for you, but ye prayed not for your selves. These and many such will come in against you, as Aggravations of your Sin, and will eternally aggravate your Misery. (4.) Therefore ye are called to work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling. Since if ye be ruined, ye must be so with a Witness ; if ye go to Hell, it must be a hotter Hell : Therefore improve vigorously the Advantages put in your Hand. Resolve with *Moses*, *Exod. xv. 2.* *He is my GOD, and I will prepare him an Habitation ; he is my Fathers GOD, and I will exalt him.* (5.) Pay a double Respect to your believing Parents. Ye owe them much as your Parents, much as Believers, much as in *Christ* before you, and much as Instruments made use of by GOD in promoting your eternal Well-being. (6.) Take Care that ye turn not aside out of their Way ; since this will prove prejudicial eminently, not only to your selves, but to your Posterity. In fine, I say to you, if ye trace your Parents Steps, ye shall attain their Blessing, even the End of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. I have a few Words from this Head to say to *unbelieving Parents* : Ye are miserable your selves ; for he that believeth not is *condemned already*, and the *Wrath of GOD abideth on him*. Ye entail as many Disadvantages upon your Posterity, as Believers transmit Advantages to theirs, ye deprive them of many Means which they might enjoy, ye ruine them by your Example, ye provoke GOD against your Families ; in fine, ye do what in you lies to ruine them eternally : So that, not only your own Blood, but the Blood of their Souls will GOD require at your Hands. Therefore, as ye tender their eternal Advantage, as ye tender your own, believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ*.

Fourthly. I have a few Words to say to the *Children of irreligious Parents*, and then I shall proceed. Ye are at a great Loss indeed by your Parents Infidelity and Impiety : Yet 'tis not an irreparable one ; for the Door is open to you, and ye are called to enter in. The Promise of Salvation is not only to Believers and to their Children, but it is to *all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD shall call*, Acts ii. 39. Therefore lay hold upon the Advantage that ye have of Mercy offered to you upon the Gospel Terms. See that ye believe in the Lord *Jesus*. Be very thankful to GOD, and admire the Riches of his undeserved Kindness in having a Regard to you, and calling you, notwithstanding your own Iniquities, and the Iniquity of your Fathers. Take Care that ye transmit not these Inconveniencies, that ye your selves ly under, to your
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Posterity. And, if ever the LORD do you Good, seek by all Means the Salvation of your Parents : And if ye obtain not an Answer of Peace with respect to them, then I can assure you, your Prayers shall return into your own Bosom, and so ye shall be no Losers.

Thus far have we prosecute the *last Clause* of the *Verse*, to which we design not to return again: We shall now proceed to that which is our principal Design, the Discovery of *Jesus Christ*, as the only Relief of Sinners, as the only one that can effectually quiet the Conscience of an awakened Sinner.

We have sufficiently explained the Words already ; that which I shall now insist upon at some length from *them*, is express'd in the following *Doctrine*.

An awakened Sinner, betaking himself to, or believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved.

I think there is no need of any *Proof* of the *Doctrine*, it lies so plain in the Words, and is so frequently asserted in the Scripture, that one shall scarce look into the Book of GOD, but he shall find some one Proof or other of this Truth. In the Prosecution of this *Doctrine* we shall, if the LORD will, follow this Method.

(I.) We shall tell you *who this convinced Sinner is*, of whom we speak in the *Doctrine*.

(II.) We shall offer you *some Account* of the Lord Jesus, in whom he is to believe.

(III.) We

(III.) We shall shortly *explain several Scripture Expressions which point out this Duty*, that from them we may understand something of its *Nature*, and then,

(IV.) We shall hold forth *the Nature of this Faith* in a few Particulars which may receive Light from the former general Head.

(V.) We shall enquire *what that Salvation is* which they shall have who believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ*.

(VI.) We shall offer *some Evidences of the Truth of the Doctrine*, and then *apply the Whole*, if the LORD allow Time, and Opportunity, and Strength.

I. We begin with the *First* of these, which is to shew *who this convinced Sinner is*, that shall obtain Salvation on his believing in the Lord *Jesus Christ*. I shall offer you his Character in the few following Particulars, in as far as we think it needful for our present Design: For that it is in some Measure requisite, is plain, since none can be sav'd but such as believe, and none can believe but convinc'd and awaken'd Sinners. Take then the Character of such an one, thus.

1. He is an *ungodly Man*. 'Tis only such as are ungodly who are saved by believing in *Jesus*. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, is his Faith counted for Righteousness*, Rom. iv. 5. Persons who are not ungodly, have no need of *Jesus*; and Persons who see not themselves to be such, will never look after him.

2. He is one that sees himself, upon this account, *obnoxious to the Judgment of GOD*, even that

that righteous judicial Sentence, that *he who committeth Sin, is worthy of Death.* He sees himself lying open to the Curse of the Law, to the Death it threatens against Sinners. When the Law says, *the Soul that sins shall die,* the Sinner hears his own Doom in that Sentence, because he sees his Name in the Sentence. The Sentence is against the Soul that sins, and this he knows to be his very Name.

3. He is a *self-condemned Man.* He not only hears GOD passing Sentence against him, but he passeth Sentence against himself. Thus it is with every convinc'd Sinner; he is as severe to himself, as GOD or the Law of GOD can be: Whatever these charge him with, all that he takes with, whatever they determine to be done against him, he writes down under it, *Just; the LORD is righteous, for I have offended.*

4. He is one that *has his Mouth stopp'd,* as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. iii. 19.* He has sinn'd, and he is sensible that there is no hiding of it. He is guilty, and there is no Excuse. He is every way *shut up under Sin,* as the Word properly signifies, *Gal. iii. 22.* *The Scripture hath concluded all under Sin;* that is, according to the Force of the Word, the Scripture hath every way *shut up or shut in* all under Sin, *that the Promise by Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* In one Word, he is a Criminal, that has got such a Sight of his Crime, that he dare neither deny it, nor endeavour to hide it, nor extenuate it, but subscribes to the Truth of all that the Law of GOD and his own Conscience charge him with. And as for the Sentence past against him, he sub-

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scribes it just : He knows that he cannot *flee* from it, nor is able to *undergo* it. He is an Enemy to GOD, brought to such a Strait, that he is able neither to fight nor to flee. And when he looks to himself, and all those Things he once laid some Weight upon, he sees no Prospect of Relief. Such an one is the convinc'd Sinner we speak of ; and such of you as never were brought to this Pass, never did believe on the Lord *Jesus Christ*. This being once clear'd, proceed we now,

II. To give *some Account of the Lord Jesus Christ*, on whom he is called to believe. Here ye are not to expect a full Account of *Christ*, this none can give ; nor shall I at large insist on what may be known of him, but only glance at a few Things, which suit the Case of the convinc'd Sinner, of whom we have just now been speaking : And this we shall do in a few Particulars.

I. The Lord *Jesus Christ*, on whom we are bid believe, is *Immanuel, GOD with us, GOD in our Nature, GOD-man in one Person. In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. And the Word that in the Beginning was with GOD, and was GOD, in the Fulness of Time was made Flesh, and dwelt among Men upon Earth, who did behold his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.* This the Apostle *John* doth evince at great Length ; this he expressly teaches, in the first Chapter of his Gospel, and the first Fourteen or Fifteen Verses of it. Now, this Discovery of *Christ* is extremely encouraging to a Sinner who is under the deep Conviction of Sin,

as was the *Jaylor* in the *Text*. If ye tell such an one, when he cries out with him, *what must I do to be saved?* Go, believe on GOD; it would give him no Relief; for all his Fears are from GOD; 'tis Destruction from GOD that's his Terror. He sees the Holiness, the Truth, the Wisdom and Justice of GOD, all breathing out Threatnings against him. Holiness cannot look upon an impure Sinner. The Truth of GOD has become Surety for his Destruction: The Justice of GOD pleads it reasonable that the Sinner should be punished, and thereby Evil taken away, GOD's Honour and the Honour of his Law repaired; and Wisdom is so deeply interested in every one of these Claims, that it seems to joyn with them. Hence it is that the Sinner is horridly afraid of GOD. So far would he be from *looking* toward him, that like *Adam*, he would *flee* from him; and endeavour to hide himself. What, would such a poor trembling Sinner reply unto any who should bid him believe in GOD, shall I believe on *him* who threatens me with Destruction, on *him*, all whose Attributes conspire, and that most justly, my everlasting Destruction? He has told me already what I am to expect at his Hand, even sure and inevitable Death, *in the Day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*: This GOD is a *consuming Fire*, and I am as *Stubble before him*. On the other Hand, tell such a convinced Sinner of a Man, a mere Man, and bid him look to him for Relief; this at first Blush appears utterly vain. What are not all Men involv'd in the same *Calamity* with me? are they not unable to save themselves? What,

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What, is Man able to sustain the Weight of that heavy Stroke of Wrath, which enrag'd Omnipotency is ready to lay on? Thus it appears that neither *mere GOD*, nor *mere Man*, is suited to give Relief to the Sinner of whom we speak; but *GOD and Man united in one*, appears exceedingly suited to give him Relief. There are Three Things which an awakened Sinner will see, at the first View, in the Person of *Christ*. (1.) He will see him to be one that may be *approach'd by him*. When one is made sensible of his own Sinfulness, so far will he be from desiring a Sight of GOD, that he will rather faint at the Thoughts of it, since he dreads he cannot see him and live. Nay, such is the Weakness of Man since the Fall, that the Sight even of a created Angel has made some of the most eminent Saints exceedingly afraid, as we have Instances more than one in the Scripture. But there is not that Dread in the Sight of one that's clothed with Flesh, that appears in the Likeness even of sinful Flesh (*Rom. viii. 3.*) as to deter from approaching to him. Nay, on the contrary, will not every one in this Case readily draw near, in Expectation of Relief from such an one, knowing him to be *Bone of his Bone*, and *Flesh of his Flesh*? This is one of the Excellencies in *Christ's* Person that ravishes the Heart of a Sinner that's looking out for Relief. (2.) The Person of *Christ*, thus consisting of the divine and human Nature united in one, appears notably fitted for undertaking the Work of a *Days-man* betwixt an angry GOD and rebel Sinners. He is equally interested in both Parties; Being GOD, he knows exactly

exactly what all the Properties of GOD do demand of Sinners ; and being Man, he knows well what Man's State is. Thus the Sinner's Fear is removed, that there is *not a Days-man who should lay his Hand upon the Head of both Parties*, as *Job* expresses it. (3.) A convinced Sinner here sees one, not only capable to know, but even to be *touch'd with the Feeling of his Infirmities*, who withal has Wisdom and Power to improve any Sense he has of our Misery to our Advantage. This is what the convinced Sinner with Admiration views in *Christ*, who is the great Mystery of Godliness, *GOD manifested in the Flesh*.

2. The Lord *Jesus Christ* is clothed with a *threefold Office*, for the Behoof and Advantage of such as shall believe on him. He is a *King*, a *Priest*, and a *Prophet*. And each of these is exceedingly suited to the Relief of an awaken'd Sinner, as we may hear afterwards.

(1.) I say he is a *Prophet* ; and as such he was promised of old to the Church by *Moses*. *A Prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up to you from among your Brethren*, says he. Because this Scripture furnishes us with a full Account of *Christ's* prophetical Office, we may take a View of it at some Length. So then that Text runs, *I will, says GOD, raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee ; and I will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him : And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken to my Words which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him*, Deut. xviii. 18, 19. Now in this Scripture we have so full an Account of *Christ's* prophetical Office,

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with respect to our present Design, that I cannot better unfold this Matter than by making some Remarks upon it. And (1.) Here we see that Christ is *indeed a Prophet*: For so he is expressly call'd, and as such he is here promised. That it is *Christ* whom *Moses* here intends, the Spirit of GOD has long since by the Mouth of the Apostle *Peter* fully determined, *Acts* iii. 22: (2.) Here we see his *Call* to that Office. *I will raise up a Prophet*, says GOD, that is, I will call and set one apart for that Work. (3.) We see further, his *Furniture* for the Work: *I will put my Words in his Mouth*. (4.) We see what his *Work and Business* is: It is to speak to them all that is commanded him of GOD; to deliver to them the whole Counsel of GOD for their Salvation. (5.) Here we see, who the Persons are to whom GOD has a *Regard*, in the Designation of Christ to this Office: They are Sinners, sensible that it was impossible for them to hear GOD speak to them immediately, and yet live; which put them upon that Desire express'd in the 16th Verse of this Chapter. *Let me not hear again the Voice of the LORD my GOD; neither let me see this great Fire any more, that I die not*. (6.) We moreover see GOD's *Design* in appointing Christ a Prophet, even a *Compliance* with the Desires and Necessities of convinc'd Sinners. This appears plainly to be his Design, if ye observe the *Connexion* betwixt the 15th and 16th Verses of this Chapter. The LORD promises, in the 15th Verse, *Christ* to be a Prophet: And in the 16th he tells, that it was, according to their Desires, in *Horeb*. (7.) We may further take No-

rice of the *Qualifications* which they desire in this Prophet, and which *Christ* accordingly is endued with; and they are, that he be *one of themselves*, one who by his Greatness should not be a Terror to them; and that he be *faithful* in declaring to them all that the LORD should acquaint him with. Thus we see in some Measure, and hereafter may see more fully, of what Use it is to Sinners, in order to their believing on *Christ*, that he be a *Prophet*.

(2.) The Lord *Jesus Christ* is a *Priest* for ever after the Order of Melchisedek, *Psal. cx. 4.* God having made him so by an Oath. And in his Discharge of this Office doth no small Part of the Concernment of awakened Sinners ly. 'Tis not my Design at present, to enter upon any large Discourse of this Office of *Christ*. I must here take Notice of, and open up the Nature of this Office, in order to that End and Scope which we now drive at, the Relief of convinced Sinners. I shall not stand upon a Recital of all the *Acts* which do belong to this Office, of which not a few might be mentioned. There are Two which deserve especial Consideration, his *Oblation*, and his *Intercession* thereupon. The *first* is the Foundation of the *second*. Now that ye may understand what Advantage flows from this Office to the Persons of whom we discourse, I shall a little enquire, *who the Person is to whom Christ offers Sacrifice, who they are for whom he doth so, who he is that offers Sacrifice, and what that Sacrifice is that he offers*: And upon the Whole it will appear, of how great Advantage this Office is to Sinners, and how much he is thereby fitted

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fitted to be the Object of Sinners Faith. I shall only touch at such Things here as are indispensably needful in order to lay a Foundation for Faith.

First. As for the Person to whom he offers Sacrifice, and with whom he intercedes, no doubt it is *GOD only*, and that as he is the just, the Sin-revenging GOD, who has declar'd that he will by no means clear the guilty; nay, that the Soul that sinneth shall die. There was no Place for Sacrifices before GOD was incensed by Sin. It had no Place under the first Covenant, wherein Adam was allowed to come into the Presence of GOD, without any Interposal on his behalf by any other. GOD being then well pleased with him, he had Acceptance with GOD; and by virtue of his Acceptance, had a Right to, and might ask and have whatever was needful for his Happiness. But upon the Entry of Sin into the World, GOD's Favour was turned into Anger and Indignation against sinful Man. This cuts him off from the Expectation of Advantage by GOD; nay more, threatens him with inevitable Ruin and Destruction from him, without the Interposal of some one or other, as a Priest to appease the Wrath of the Sin-revenging GOD. Whence in the

Second Place; 'tis easy to understand who the Persons are for whom he offers Sacrifice: They are Sinners, who are obnoxious to the Wrath of GOD upon the account of Sin; who not only are cast out of the Favour of GOD but moreover are lying open to the Stroke of vindictive Justice, and this

Thirdly, clears to us who he is that must interpose as a Priest : He must be one acceptable to GOD : Such an *High Priest*, says the *Apostle*, *became us, who is holy, harmless, undefil'd, and separate from Sinners*, Heb. vii. 26. One who upon the account of his own Sins, was obnoxious to the just Indignation of GOD, could be of no use to Sinners in this Matter. Again, He must be one who was capable of being affected with the Feeling of our Infirmities, that he might have Compassion upon us : And upon this Account it is that the *Apostle* says, Heb. ii. 17. *That it behoved Christ to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in Things pertaining to GOD, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People : For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted : For, as the same Apostle has it, Heb. iv. 15. We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.* In fine, he must be one call'd of GOD to this Office ; for no Man takes to himself this Office but he that is call'd of GOD, as was Aaron. All which Qualifications are found in Christ, and in him only, who is the *Apostle and High Priest of our Profession*.

Fourthly. We are to consider what that Sacrifice is which Christ as a Priest doth offer unto an incensed GOD for Sinners. That he should have something to offer, is needful absolutely upon account of the Office ; For every *High Priest* is ordain'd to offer Gifts and Sacrifices, wherefore it is a Necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer, Heb.

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viii. 3. What that Sacrifice was, the same *Apostle* tells us, *Heb. ix. 13.* For, saith he, *if the Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh: How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to GOD, purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living GOD?* The Sacrifice he offers is himself.

What has been said of Christ's priestly Office, I shall bring home to the Business in Hand, in the few following Particulars. From what has been said it appears that the Case betwixt GOD and sinful Man stands plainly thus. (1.) Man has sinn'd and thereby provok'd GOD to Wrath. (2.) Incensed Justice lays hold of sinful Man, takes him, and, like *Isaac*, binds him, and lifts the Hand with the Knife in it, to setch a Stroke down upon the Sinner. (3.) In this Case, no Prayers, no Tears of the Sinner, nay, nor any Thing that the Sinner can think upon, can avail: *Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not*, says our LORD, *Heb. x. 5.* (4.) While Things are in this desperate Condition with the Sinner, Christ, being made a Priest, as has been said, by virtue of his Office steps in and pleads for the Sinner, and offers himself in the Sinner's Room, to suffer what Justice was ready to have inflicted upon the Sinner. (5.) Justice accepts of the Sacrifice of this Lamb of GOD's providing, and lets the Sinner go, but slays the Sacrifice. (6.) This being done, GOD is appeased; he has no more to charge the Sinner with; for the Sacri-

fice has suffered; nay more, the Sacrifice being of infinitely more Value than the Sinner, doth deserve and purchase a great many Favours for him, all which this high Priest takes Care to have bestowed on him; that is to say, he intercedes for him, that he may lose none of these Things which *Christ* has purchas'd for him: For his *Intercession* is nothing else, but that *Care*, if I may so speak, which the High Priest of our Profession takes, that all these for whom he did offer himself a Sacrifice obtain the Advantage of that Sacrifice. And of how great Use this Office is to such Sinners as are in the *Taylor's* Case, may appear in part from what has already been discours'd on this Head, and may more fully appear from what we shall afterward discourse on the same. Now we come

(3.) To speak of *Christ's* being a King. As he is by *GOD* appointed to be a Prophet and a Priest, so is he likewise to be a King. *I have set my King upon my holy Hill of Zion, Psal. ii. 6.* His profess'd Adherence to this cost him his Life. This was his Charge, that he made himself a King. I cannot stand to speak of all these Things which do belong to *Christ's* kingly Office. I shall only hint at a few Things which are of especial Use to our present Purpose. (1.) He has Power and Authority, by virtue of this Office, to enact all such Laws as may contribute to the Good and Advantage of his Subjects. (2.) He has Power to reduce all such as do belong to his Kingdom, to his Obedience. *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power,* says *GOD* to him,

him, *Psal. cx. 3.* Sometimes the Subjects of his Kingdom do rebel against him ; but he makes them by his Power willingly to submit to him.

(3.) He has Power to protect his Subjects against all their Enemies : And hereupon it is that the Church's Confidence is founded, *Isa. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us.* (4.) He has Power entirely to make a Conquest of all his Enemies ; For he *must reign till he hath put all his Enemies under his Feet, 1 Cor. xv. 25.* In fine, he has a Power whereby he is able even to subdue all Things to himself, *all Power being given him in Heaven and in Earth;* and being made *Head over all Things to the Church,* he will take Care to employ and lay out all for the Advantage, Peace, Rest and Stability of his Church and People. But leaving this, we proceed,

3. To give a further Account of the *Lord Jesus Christ* on whom Sinners are call'd to believe. Two Things we have said of him ; *one*, that he is GOD in our Nature ; the *other*, that he is clothed with a *threefold Office.* We add, in the next Place, as the Consequence of what has been said of him, that he is one in whom the convinced Sinner will find Relief against a *threefold Evil*, under which he lies. There are *Three* Things which do exceedingly burden the Conscience of a Sinner in any good measure awakened, *Ignorance, Guilt, and the Power of Sin.* (1.) He finds himself *extremely ignorant*, perfectly in the dark, as to the Mind and Will of GOD. He knows not what Hand he shall turn to, what

is Sin, or what is Duty, whether he had best ly still, or move out of his present State ; or if he find it ruining to ly still, he knows not what Course to betake himself to. Now for this Plague, which is one of the dismal Consequences of Man's Apostacy from GOD, there is Relief in Christ's *prophetical* Office, by which he doth translate Sinners out of Darkness into his marvellous Light. What before was hid from the Eyes of all Living, that he reveals to Sinners. That there were any Thoughts of Mercy or Grace for Sinners in the Heart of GOD, could never have been known by any, had not *Christ* revealed it : For, *no Man hath seen GOD at any Time, the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John i. 18.* (2.) Man is press'd down with *Guilt*, and 'tis only in Christ's *priestly* Office that the awakened Sinner can find Relief against this ; for there is no way of purging the Conscience from dead Works, but only by the Application of the Blood of *Christ*, who offered himself to GOD through the eternal Spirit, for this very End. (3.) In him there is Relief against *the Power of Sin*, which is one Part, and that no small Part, of the Misery which Man fell under by his Apostacy from GOD. He is insulted over, and enslav'd by Sin : And there never was, nor can there ever be any Relief for him, but only in *Christ*, who has a Power whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself. He can strengthen the weak, and make the unwilling to become willing, by a *Day of his Power*, and turn the disobedient to the Wisdom of the just. Moreover,

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4. The Lord Jesus Christ is one in whom the Sinner finds a *threefold tormenting Scruple fully satisfied*. When the LORD opens the Sinner's Eyes, and gives him a View of his Condition, how Matters stand betwixt GOD and him, then there are *Three Things* which ly exceedingly heavy upon the Sinner. (1.) Where shall I get one that has Ability sufficient to undertake for me? The Sinner sees so much needful to be done in order to his Relief, that he can think of none in Heaven or Earth that's able to relieve him. He is, as it were, laid in a Grave that has a Stone roll'd to the Door; and many a Time is he forc'd to put the Question, Who will roll away the Stone? He sees Mountains lying in the Way, and cannot think of an Arm sufficient to lift them. In *Christ* only can he be satisfied. He it is who is the mighty One, on whom the LORD has laid Help, *Psal. lxxxix. 19.* one chosen out of the People for that very End, that he might be the Strength of such as put their Trust in him, He is the LORD JEHOVAH, in whom there is everlasting Strength. (2.) When the Sinner hears of one that's able, this gives him no Relief; for presently another Doubt perplexes him, and fills his Soul with Anxiety: Here indeed I see Ability sufficient; oh! but I fear he has no Mind to employ and lay out his Ability that Way. This made many in the Days of *Christ's* Flesh, when he lived upon Earth, come to him with their Hearts full of Fear; they doubted he might not be willing to employ his Skill, to lay out his Ability for their Help and Relief.

Relief. *If thou wilt*, said the Leper, *thou canst make me clean*, Matth. viii. 2. And so says the Sinner. Now in the Discovery of Christ that's here made, we see an Answer to this Doubt: As he is the LORD, one that has all Power in Heaven and in Earth; whence it is that he is *mighty to save*: So he is *Jesus*, one that's *willing*, and designs to lay out and improve his Ability that Way. But here (3.) another Doubt may stare the Sinner broad in the Face; there is perhaps *wanting a Commission for the Work*: The Lord *Jesus Christ* wants neither Power nor Will; but I much question the Father's Willingness. This many Times sticks long with distressed Sinners. But in this Person, there is an Answer to this as well as the former: He is *Christ*, *him hath GOD the Father seal'd, anointed, and set apart for that very Work*. He it is that hath exalted him to be a Saviour, and put Power in his Hand, for completing his Work, and saving to the utmost all that come to GOD through him.

5. *Christ*, as clothed with his threefold Office, is able to remove a threefold Obstruction that stood in the Way of the Sinner's Salvation and Happiness, arising from the Nature of GOD. (1.) *Justice* had a Plea against the Sinner, and stood betwixt him and Salvation. The Sentence of Justice is, That he who doth sin is worthy of Death. Well, the Sinner that believes in *Christ* answers, I am dead, I suffered in *Christ*. (2.) *Holiness* says, nothing shall approach it that's impure. Well, *Christ* says, I have Power to purge them from their Filth, by the Spirit of Judg-

Judgment and of Burning. (3.) But then the Difficulty remains, as to the *Discovery* of this to the Sinner. If GOD should call him to Blessedness, he could not bear it: But here *Christ* undertakes to be the Messenger to impart the welcome News, That all these Rubs are out of the Way. These Things I only name, because I have hinted at them already; and hereafter, if the LORD give Life and Strength, may have Occasion to treat them more accurately and distinctly. At present we design rather Soundness, than Accuracy, rather Satisfaction to the distressed, than Pleasure to the curious Enquirer.

6. *Christ* is one who is able to do the Sinner a threefold Kindness with respect to his spiritual Adversaries. Three Things they do against the Sinner: *First*, They charge him with Things that he cannot deny. *Secondly*. They lay deep Contrivances against him that he cannot discover. *Thirdly*. They fall upon him with a Force that he is not able to resist, and thereby endeavour his Ruin. As for the *First*, *Christ* puts an Answer in the Sinner's Mouth to all Satan's Charges against him. As to the *second*, he gives him Wisdom to escape his Snares, to know the Depths of Satan. And as to the *last*, he furnishes with Power, whereby he is made more than a Conqueror over all Enemies that put themselves in his Way.

7. That there may be nothing wanting, this LORD JESUS CHRIST is one who can satisfy the Mind, the Conscience and Heart of sinful Man. He fills the Mind with Light; he pacifies the Conscience, and stills its Disorders; and

and he presents to the Will a suitable Good. He as a Prophet opens blind Eyes, and enlightens a dark Mind; as a Priest he stops the Mouth of a disturb'd and disturbing Conscience; and as a King he bestows upon Man what is sufficient to content his Heart, even himself, and all Things else.

8. To conclude all, he is *one offered in the Gospel*, for all these glorious Ends to all who need him. He has bid all that are *weary and heavy laden*, come to him, and has promised them Welcome. He is one whom GOD has in the everlasting Gospel proposed as the Object of Faith, on whom Sinners are allowed, warranted, nay, commanded to believe, in order to their Salvation. These Things we shall not any further insist on at present. I come now

III. To mention and open up these *Scripture Expressions whereby this Duty of Believing is held forth*, and that are of the same Import with that in the Text. This is a Duty whereupon Salvation and Damnation do depend; therefore the LORD has taken great Care to make its Nature plain: And because Sinners are of many different Sorts, and have different Ways of taking up their Condition, the LORD has express'd it so many Ways, that every one may see that the Duty is suitable to their Circumstances, and expressed in a way that's adapted to their Capacity. This Enquiry we are now to enter upon, may be of great Use; therefore we shall insist at the more Length upon it. Some are ignorant of the Nature of Faith; know not what it is: This Enquiry is like to lead them into an

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Understanding of that Duty, which is the Foundation of all others, without which they signify nothing in order to the Salvation of such as perform them. Others know what Faith is, but are not confirmed in their Apprehensions of its Nature, and therefore may be easily induced to think themselves in a Mistake. To such it will be of notable Use to understand that the Thoughts of its Nature lean upon the plain Meaning of so many Scripture Expressions. In fine, this Enquiry is like to bring down the Thing to the Capacity of every one of you, who will give heed; since such as cannot take it up under one Notion, may under another. And I might add, That it may be of Use to confirm such as have Faith, that it is so; and to convince them who want it, that they do so. And, to conclude all, it will give Light to the next general Head, and confirm the Description we design to give of it: These Things have induced me, not only to enquire into the several Expressions whereby the Scriptures hold forth this Duty, but to insist upon them at somewhat more length than we are wont to use upon such Occasions. This being premised for shewing the Use of this Enquiry, we come now to enter upon it.

1. Then, to believe on the *Lord Jesus Christ*, is to *look unto him*, Isa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am GOD, and there is none else.* And to the same Purpose is that of the Apostle, Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight*

Weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. I conceive that the Spirit of GOD in this Expression; alludes to the brazen Serpent set up in the Wilderneck. The Children of Israel sinned against the LORD; therefore he sent fiery Serpents which stung them, and many died of their Wounds. The LORD in his Pity, notwithstanding the Dishonour they had done to him, was pleased to ordain the Erection of a brazen Serpent upon a Pole, that whoever was stung might look to it, and be saved from Death. Just so, all Men are stung by Sin; and all Men had died of the Wound, had not GOD been pleased to set up *Jesus Christ*, and given Command that all who feel the Smart of Sin should *look unto him* and be saved. In this Expression we may see what is the Nature of Faith. (1.) We see who it is that believes, 'tis one that is stung, a Sinner that's sensible of the Smart of Sin. Such and such only will believe. The whole *Israelites*, such as were not touched, or such as were not sensible that they were touched and stung by the Serpents, would not look to the brazen Serpent; they had no Business to do with it; it was none of their Concernment; it had no Use to them. Just so is it with whole Sinners that were never pained at the Heart for Sin; they see no Occasion for Christ, and cannot understand of what Use he is. (2.) We see here *what it is* that gives Rise to Faith; 'tis a *smarting Sense* of present Pain and future Danger. The Men

Men that were stung found themselves ill, and saw Ground to dread they might be worse, since the Sting was mortal; this made them look. And this makes Sinners look to *Jesus Christ*; they find the Poison of Sin already tormenting them, and they see that this is but the Beginning of Sorrows, the Distemper being mortal. (3.) Here we see what it is to *which* the Sinner looks; 'tis unto *Jesus*, and that as he is GOD, and a GOD laying out himself for the Salvation of Sinners. 'Tis GOD and none else, that must save Sinners, if they be saved. (4.) We may here see further, *how* the Sinner looks to him, and what he looks at in him; which is, that he is the *Ordinance* of GOD's Appointment for his Salvation, and proposed as such. Moreover (5.) Here we see what Faith it self is, for this Expression of it, *Looking to Jesus*, plainly imports (1.) That the Person is convinced of the Sufficiency of that Remedy that GOD has appointed. (2.) *Expectation* of Relief from it. And (3.) The Heart's *resting* here, and trusting to it for Healing, without betaking it self to any other Thing, from a Conviction of its own Need on the one Hand, and of the Sufficiency of this Relief on the other.

2. To believe on *Jesus Christ*, is to come to him. So Faith is expressed both in the Old and in the New Testament. In that forecited xlv of *Isa.* we see that the Lord presses his People to believe, under the Notion of *looking* to him, in 22 Verse: And we find that in the following Verses he promises, that they shall obey this Command, that they shall believe; and then he

expresses Faith by coming. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I Righteousness and Strength ; even to him shall Men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the Seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. The same Duty we find expressed by the Prophet Jeremiah in the same Manner, Return, says the LORD, ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings, Jer. iii. 22. To which they answer, Behold, we come unto thee ; for thou art the LORD our GOD. And what their Errand is, the Promise GOD makes in the Beginning of the Verse, and the Profession they make in the following, plainly enough insinuates ; 'tis to get Healing to their Backslidings ; and 'tis to get that Salvation from him, which they had in vain looked for from the Hills and Multitude of Mountains. And Faith is frequently held forth by this same Expression in the New Testament also, John vi. 35, 37. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in no ways cast out. He that cometh unto me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. And he complains, John v. 40. that they would not come to him that they might have Life. Now the Spirit of GOD expressing Faith thus, gives us to understand, (1.) What the State of Persons is before they do believe ; they are at a Distance from GOD, like the Prodigal in a far Country, not near his Father's House, where he sustains many Inconveniencies, suffers Hunger and Thirst, is oppressed by Enemies ; and in one Word, meets with all Inconveniencies that

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that tend to imbitter his Life to him, and kill him outright at the Long-run. (2.) Here the LORD insinuates to us what is the *Rise* or the Occasions of the Sinner's Motion or of his believing, both upon GOD's Part, and upon the Sinner's Part. *Upon the Sinner's Part*, it is a Conviction, a smarting Sense of present Want, and of future Wrath. He is hungry, and can have no Food; he is thirsty, and can have no Drink; and unless he get Food and Drink, he knows he must die. He finds the present Smart and Pain, and knows he must suffer more, if he get not a Supply. The starving *Prodigal* was hungry, and would have been glad of the scantest Allowance; but he could not have it in that unhappy Place where he was. Just so is it with Sinners, when at a Distance from *Christ*; when the LORD opens their Eyes to see what their Condition is, a pressing Sense of Want following thereupon, is as it were the Spring of their Motion toward the Lord *Jesus Christ*. *On the Lord's Part*, that which occasions, nay, causes this coming, is his *calling* them, and his *drawing* them. He calls them to come unto him, *Matth. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.* And he powerfully draws them to him; for no Man can come, except he be drawn. Therefore we find the LORD premising peremptorily in that just now quoted Scripture, *Isa. xlv. 24. that unto him shall Men come.* (2.) We see to whom a Sinner comes by Faith; it is to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, in whom there is Righteousness, and Strength to be had, which is Matter of glorifying

rying to poor Sinners. (4.) We see *what this coming* it self is, it is the same with believing on him. And *First*. This Way of expressing Faith imports, That the Sinner *despairs* of being relieved where he is. If the *Prodigal* could have been supplied where he was, he would not have come home: So neither would Sinners. *Secondly*. It imports a Perswasion not only of Christ's *Sufficiency*, but of his *Willingness*; or at least that he is not unwilling that we should be bettered by his Sufficiency, and have Supplies for our Wants, according to the Riches of his Glory. *Thirdly*. It imports the Soul's Rejection of all other Things which have any Appearance of Relief in them: For when we come to one, we go from all the rest. *Fourthly*. It imports an Expectation of Relief from him: This holds the Soul moving, and without this it could not move. In fine, the Whole of this Matter of Deliberation; after felt Insufficiency in other Things, the Soul comes to, and acquiesces in Christ for Salvation.

3. To believe on Christ, is to flee, to run to him. He is that *strong Tower* to which the *Righteous run and are safe*, Prov. xviii. 10. And to the same Purpose is that of the Apostle, Heb. vi. 18. where GOD is said, by two immutable Things, to provide for the strong Consolation of such as have *fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them*.

This Expression takes in all that's in the former; for coming is included in flying and running; yet the Expressions of running and flying import something more, *viz.* the Sinner's being exceedingly

ingly mov'd by a Sight of his Danger, and his extraordinary Earnestness to be out of Harm's Way. The awakened Sinner is like the Man-slayer of old : He was safe no where but in the City of Refuge ; therefore he run thither. He was obnoxious to Justice ; the Avenger of Blood had a Commission to kill any Murderer he found out of this City. So is it with Sinners : They are in continual Hazard of their Life. Justice has a Plea against them, and pursues them. Death is, as it were, the Serjeant that follows the Guilty close ; and if it overtake them before they get into the City of Refuge, then they are gone ; it will kill them doubly, it will put an End to their present Life, and prove the Beginning of eternal Misery to them. *How excellent,* says the Psalmist, *is thy loving Kindness, O GOD ! therefore the children of Men put their Trust under the Shadow of thy Wings,* Psal. xxxvi. 7. 'Tis the Excellency of GOD's loving Kindness, as reveal'd to Sinners in Christ Jesus, that engages Sinners to betake themselves to him, and trust under the Shadow of his Wings ; as the pursued Birds are wont to betake themselves to the Dam, and there to shelter themselves.

To believe, is to roll over our Burden upon the Lord Jesus Christ, *Psal. xxii. 8.* The Word that is there rendred *trusted*, in the first Language signifies rolling over. *He trusted in the LORD,* that is, he rolled himself over upon the LORD. Hence it is, that we find our Lord inviting such as are weary and heavy laden, to come to him that they may find Rest to their Souls. Sin is one of

the heaviest of Burdens. Man would sink under it quite. Every one that feels the Weight of their Sins, will, with the *Psalmist*, own, That they are too heavy for them to bear. *Mine Iniquities*, says he, *are gone over mine Head*; as a *heavy Burden*, they are too heavy for me, *Psal. xxxix. 4.* They prov'd a Burden so heavy to the Angels that sinned, that its Weight sunk them into the bottomless Pit. They are at this Day so heavy, that the *whole Creation* groans under the Pressure and Weight of them, *Rom. viii. 22.* They who have the first Fruits of the Spirit, and so have, as it were, the heaviest End of the Burden taken off them, yet do *groane being burdened*, *2 Cor. v. 4.* The very being of Sin, tho' its Guilt be taken away, is such a Burden, as the Saints find it hard to bear. In every one of these we might take Notice of all the Particulars formerly noted in the two first Scripture Expressions which we insisted upon; but 'tis needless to repeat the same Things over and over.

5. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, is to *put on the Lord Jesus*, *Rom. xiii. 14.* *Put ye on the Lord Jesus.* Man by Nature is like *Adam*, naked; and tho' he endeavour to cover himself with Fig-leaf Aprons of his own framing, it will not serve his Turn; it will not hide his Nakedness; nor will it preserve him from the Storms of Wrath, that are the necessary Consequents of Sin. No Robe can cover him, but that of Christ's imputed Righteousness: And to believe, is to put on Christ for Righteousness. Now here we see, (1.) What Man's State without Christ

Christ is; he has no Ornament, the Shame of his Nakedness is seen, and he is exposed to Storms. (2.) Here we see, what is that Clothing that Sinners betake themselves to; 'tis Christ; they come to him for white Rayment, that is for Beauty and Glory, and covering their Shame. (3.) We see wherein the Nature of Faith lies: And we may take it up in three Things. *First.* The Sinner sees in Christ what is sufficient for Ornament, for hiding of his Nakedness, and preserving from the Injury of the Storm. *Secondly.* He, being convinced of his Need, puts Christ as a Covering betwixt him and Spectators, that when they look to him, he is not seen, but only Christ. His Deformity is hidden under Christ's Beauty and Glory. *Thirdly.* The Sinner rests here; he thinks of no other Covering or Ornament.

6. To believe on Christ, is to receive him, John i. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of GOD, even to them that believe on his Name.* And elsewhere 'tis expressed in the same Manner; only the Object is varied, for they who believe are said to receive *Remission of Sins*, Acts x. 43. and to receive *the Atonement*, Rom. v. 11. Here we may again understand something of the Nature of Faith: For here we see (1.) Who he is that believes; he is one that *wants Christ*; he is one that wants Righteousness; one that's condemned to die, and wants a Pardon. (2.) We see what it is that Faith eyes, that the sensible Sinner receives; 'tis *Christ and all with him*, as offered to him: For as he is said to receive

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Christ,

Christ, so is he said to receive Remission of Sins, &c. And 'tis most certain, That none can separate Christ and his Benefits; he that takes one, takes all. (3.) We see what Faith is, 'tis the *Acceptation* of what's offered, for the Ends for which it is offered. Christ and all his Purchase is made Offer of to Sinners, and that freely; and they accept of the Offer, and receive him.

7. To believe on the Lord Jesus, is to *lean upon him, to stay our selves on him.* *Who is this that cometh up from the Wilderness leaning upon her Beloved?* Cant. viii. 5. that is, believing on her Beloved. And in the like Manner doth the Prophet *Isaiah* express himself, *Isa.* l. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness and hath no Light? Let him trust in the Name of the LORD, and stay upon his GOD.* Now here we again may see what the Sinner's State is before he doth believe: He is in a tottering Condition; he is not able to stand under the Weight of that Burden he has upon him. He is not able to abide the Shock of the Storm that's blowing against him; if he get not something to lean to, he must fall: And if he fall, he is crushed entirely; for he stands upon the Brink of the Pit, and if he falls, he falls into that Pit, whence there is no Redemption. If he miss a Step, and plunge into the Pit, there is no stepping up thence again: This he sees to be his Case; he is sensible of his Danger, and sees Christ able to support him, to establish him: Therefore he leans to him; he expects to be able

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able to stand the Shock of all the Storms that can blow against him in his Dependence on him.

8. To believe on Christ, is *to lay hold on him, to take hold of his Strength.* Let him take hold of my Strength, says the LORD, that he may make Peace with me, and he shall make Peace with me, Isa. xxvii. 5. And it is called a *taking hold of GOD's Covenant*, Isa. lvi. 4. And in the New Testament 'tis called an *apprehending of Christ*, Phil. iii. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* And Heb. vi. 18. 'tis called a *laying hold on the Hope set before us.* The Sinner is like to sink; and seeing Christ by him, he catches hold of him, to keep himself from sinking. We might multiply other Expressions of Faith, such as *cleaving to the LORD, opening to Christ, submitting to the Righteousness of GOD*, 2 Kings viii. 5. Deut. iv. 4. These we pass, not designing a full Enumeration, but what may lay a Foundation for the following Enquiry, and lead us into the Meaning of this Word used in the Text. We might have insisted in shewing these three or four last Expressions, to be comprehensive of all the Particulars noticed in the two or three first Expressions: But what is obvious needs not be insisted upon. We shall therefore wave the Explication of any more Texts to this Purpose, and proceed

IV. To enquire what is implied in this Duty enjoyn'd in the Text, *Believe on the Lord Jesus*

Jesus Christ. This Enquiry will be easy, after such a Foundation has been laid in the preceeding. *Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ* implies then

1. *A Sense of Sin and Misery.* This is plain from all the Expressions whereby the Spirit of GOD elsewhere points forth this Duty. There is not one of them but carries in it an Indication of this. The *stung Israelite* is sensible of his *Smart* and *Danger* before he looks to the *brazen Serpent*. The *Prodigal* knows his *Want* before he thinks of coming to his Father's House. The *Manslayer* understands his *Sin* and *Danger*, before he flees to the City of Refuge. The *burdened Sinner* is sensible of the *Weight* of *Sin*, before he roll it over upon another: And the like may be said of all the rest of the Expressions mention'd; putting on, receiving, leaning to, laying Hold of, opening, and cleaving to the Lord Jesus Christ. All of them plainly intimate this, That a Sense of *Sin* and *Danger* is the Ground-work of this Duty, necessarily presupposed to, and implied in it. And moreover we may not only understand, That the *Sense* of *Sin* and *Misery* is implied in the Duty, but also *what Sort* of a Sense of these it is, which is requisite, and which is implied. And

(1.) By these Expressions we may see, that 'tis a *distinct* and *particular Knowledge* of our *Sin* and *Misery*. The Sinner that betakes himself to Christ by Faith, knows his *Sore*, understands well the *Evil* he labours under. 'Tis not a confused

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and general Apprehension of Danger, such as Persons who are melancholy sometimes fall under, without understanding what it is or whence it flows ; but they can tell *distinctly* what it is that pains them. The stung Man knows where he is wounded. The Prodigal can tell what he wants. The Manslayer can tell why he makes such Haste to the City of Refuge. The burdened Sinner can tell, that 'tis a Load upon him, under the Weight of which he is like to be crush'd, that makes him flee to one that has Shoulders able to carry it.

(2.) This Sense of Sin and Misery, as 'tis distinct, so 'tis *deep*. A great many of those who live under the Gospel, and are furnished with any tolerable Measure of Knowledge, it may be, can tell pretty distinctly their Sin and Danger ; and, it may be, know likewise many particular Sins they are guilty of : Yet their Sense however *distinct*, is not *deep*. But such as do believe have a *deep* Sense of Sin and Misery. 'Tis such a Sense as is *fix'd* and has *Rooting* in the Mind, it engrosses the Thoughts, and fills the Mind with Apprehensions about the Soul's State and Condition. And moreover, it doth not hold here, but sinks down upon the *Heart*, and takes hold of the *Affections*, and fills them likewise. Fear, Grief, Hatred and Revenge take their Turns in the Soul : Grief for the *Offence* done to GOD ; Fear for the Consequence of it, with respect to our selves ; Hatred against Sin and Self-revenge, because of our Folly in bringing on the Guilt of so much Sin upon our selves. Many in the visible Church who will pretend

tend they are sensible of Sin, have never, it may be, to this Day been affected with it ; never had any Grief or Fear, any Hatred or Revenge against it and themselves on its account. Such Persons, pretend what they will, are indeed Strangers to Faith, and one Day will be found so. The Man that flees for his Life to the City of Refuge, not only knows what he has done, and what Sin deserves ; but moreover has a deep Impression of both. What do ye think was it that busied the Man's Thoughts, when fleeing to the City of Refuge ? Certainly his Sin and Danger were the Things that stuck with him, and affected his Heart with Fear, which made him flee again to the City of Refuge : And the like might be said with respect to the other Expressions of Faith.

(3.) This Sense of Sin and Misery is a *pressing Apprehension of both* : And this lies in Two Things. *First*. It makes his present State and Condition intolerable, I mean it makes a Christless State *utterly intolerable*. 'Tis so uneasy, it cannot be endured. 'Tis not like that Sense of Sin which most Part have, and have no more that suffers them to live contentedly all their Days without Christ in the World. Who of you will not pretend to be sensible of Sin ? And yet who of you doth not find it an easy Thing to live in that Condition ? I appeal your Consciences who pretend to be sensible of Sin, whether or not ye could live contentedly all your Days in your present State, had ye but Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, all the Necessaries for a present Life ? I am sure most
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of you cannot but own, that ye would and could do so; ye could easily digest Sin, and get rid of Disturbance from that, if Things in a World went well with you. A sad and sure Symptom is this that hitherto ye are not sensible of Sin, and therefore do not believe. *Secondly.* It prompts to diligent Endeavours after Sa'vation, as absolutely necessary. The sensible Sinner, as he cannot rest and acquiesce with Satisfaction in his present Condition, so it makes him restless in looking after Relief.

All these Things appear so plain from what has formerly been discours'd, in the Explication of the several Scripture Expressions which point forth this Duty, that 'tis needless to insist upon the Proof of them by new Scriptures. And indeed, tho' the Testimonies alledged had not given such pregnant Proof of this, the Reason of the Thing it self will discover it to be indispensably necessary to Faith, that there be a *distinct, deep, and pressing* Sense of Sin. For, (1.) Where there is only a confus'd Apprehension of Danger, or indistinct Notion of it, it confounds and disturbs the Sinner, and puts him perfectly out of case, to judge of the Suitableness of any Relief that's offered to him. He knows not where the Sore is; and therefore can neither know what would be useful, nor where to apply it. (2.) If Impressions of Sin and Danger be not deep, and amount to no more but some Notions floating in the Brain, every Thing will carry the Mind off from the Gospel-relief, and take it to other Things. Unless the Affections be some way or other engaged, we seldom do any Thing to
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Purpose in any Business. In fine, a Man that feels *some Pain*, and fears *some Danger*, may defer and neglect his going to the Physician ; but one that's under *intolerable Pain*, must take some one way or other for his Relief, and will stick at nothing so he may obtain it. 'Tis much with these Sinners, who have some Sense of Sin, but are Strangers to this distinct, deep and pressing Apprehension of their Sin and Misery, which Faith comprehends and implies in its Nature, as it is with one who has some Sore in his Leg : He knows where the Pain is, he feels some Smart of the Pain ; but 'tis not such a Smart as disables him entirely from walking or conversing with others : He goes indeed uneasily with it ; ay, but he goes still, and it may be sometimes he gets rid of the Thoughts of it, and therefore can make a Shift to live in that Condition. If one tell him, that it will turn to a Gangrene and prove mortal ; he flatters himself that possibly it may cure of its own accord, or by the Use of some domestick Remedies ; and therefore he will rather stay still in that Condition, than go to a Physician who cures by cutting off. Just so is it with *half awakened Sinners* : They never come the length of *believing*, because their Sense of their Sin is not so deep, as to make them in earnest think of the Physician. They hope to get their Wound cur'd at home, by some easier Remedy, than the *cutting off the right Hand or Foot, and plucking out the Eye*. But where the Sense just now spoken of is found, such an one will be satisfied with none of those Things. This Sense is not
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only presupposed to Faith's first Actings ; but moreover, it continues in some Measure in the Soul as long as we live here by Faith, and is the Spring of all the after Actings of Faith. But passing this, this Believing implies,

2. Some *Knowledge of Christ Jesus*. Hence it is that we find Faith called Knowledge, by the Prophet *Isa. liii. 11. He shall see of the Travel of his Soul, and shall be satisfied. By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many ; for he shall bear their Iniquities.* By his Knowledge, that is, by Faith in him, shall my righteous Servant justify many: Now this Knowledge is evidently requisite. From all that formerly has been hinted, in the opening up of the Scriptures we insisted on, not one of them but speaks this needful. And here there must Three Things be known in reference to *Jesus Christ*.

(1.) *The Excellency of his Person*. This is that which Faith fixes its Eye upon first. 'Tis him we primarily receive ; 'tis to him we look, we flee, we run ; 'tis on him we lean, we stay our selves, and roll over our Burdens ; therefore his Person must be known. We must know that he is GOD and Man in one Person, *GOD manifested in the Flesh*. Now that this Knowledge of the Person of *Christ* is a necessary Ingredient in Faith, not only appears from the Consideration just now laid down, but also from this, that otherwise we can know nothing of his Usefulness to us ; since all that has its Rise from the glorious Constitution of his Person. 'Tis from this that he is one able to save lost Sinners : Therefore of Necessity this must be known.

(2.) Be-

(2.) Believing implies the Knowledge of *Christ's Fulness to save*. There is no Faith without this. 'Tis the Knowledge of Sufficiency alone that can induce to Reliance : And if there be not in Christ a Fulness of all these Things that are requisite in order to the effectuating the Salvation of Sinners, then is he no meet, no suitable Person, to be believed on: Therefore of Necessity he must be known, as the *only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and of Truth*. And this, as was said before, flows from the Constitution of his Person, which therefore must be known in order to our Acquaintance with this. *And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us ; and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and of Truth*. 'Tis from the Union of the Two Natures into one, the *Word's* tabernacling in Flesh, that this glorious Fulness of Grace and of Truth flows.

(3.) Believing implies the Knowledge of *Christ's Suitableness to the Sinner's Condition*. There may be Fulness and Sufficiency where there is not Suitableness. The City of Refuge, tho' its Gates had been shut, and the Ways to it impassable, would yet have been sufficient to have preserv'd such as should get within it : But in this Case, a Sinner, the Man-slayer, could have no Relief from it, there being no way of the Communication of that Sufficiency to him, no Way for him to have that Security communicate to him. Just so it is here, Christ cloth'd in human Nature is indeed, and could not but have been sufficient to do all that was requisite in order

der to our eternal Salvation: But in order to Sinners accepting of him, it must be understood, that there is a Way of Conveyance, whereby all this Fulness may be called ours. We must know him, not only as full, but as he has assum'd the Exercise of his threefold Office, whereby all the Benefits he has purchas'd are made over unto us, and do in very deed become ours. But we proceed to a

3d. Thing implied in *Believing*. This Duty not only implies the Sense of Sin, and the Knowledge of *Christ* just now insisted upon, but moreover it implies *some Knowledge of the Gospel Offer of Christ*. This is absolutely necessary in order to our Acceptance of *Christ*. It was not enough to set the Manslayer a running to the City of Refuge, that he knew there was a City that had Gates open, and was sufficient to preserve him; but moreover he must know, that it was design'd for that Purpose, that he had *Warrant* to enter in at these open Gates, and so to expect Protection. And here there are *Two Things* must of Necessity be known.

(1.) That *Christ* and *all his Benefits* are indeed offered in the *Gospel* to poor Sinners, and that freely. Hence it is that our Catechism doth thus qualify the Object of saving Faith, while it describes Faith in *Christ* to be a *saving Grace* whereby we receive and rest upon him as he is offered to us in the *Gospel*.

(2.) As we must know that he is offered to us, so we must understand what the *Terms* are whereon he is offered. That he is offered freely, doth

doth not hinder his being offered upon *Terms*. If one offers another a Sum of Money, if he will receive it; he may be said to offer it upon *Terms*, and yet to offer it *freely*: And just such are the Gospel *Terms* upon which the Lord *Christ* is offered; whoever will take him and use him, shall have him. But to be a little more particular, here we may learn what these *Terms* are, from that of the *Apostle*, *Phil. iii. 3.* For we are the *Circumcision which worship GOD in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh.* These are the Persons who have an Interest in *Christ*, who come up to these *Terms*: And the Knowledge of them is necessarily implied in believing. We must know that upon these and no other *Terms* may we be saved. (1.) We must know that *all Confidence in the Flesh* is entirely to be abandoned. There must be no Expectation of Relief or Salvation, from any external Privilege, or any Performance of Duties. We must know that our own Prayers and Tears can be of no Value in this Matter. (2.) We must know that we are only to *rejoyce in Christ Jesus*. What is here called *rejoycing* is elsewhere called *glorying*. That *he that glorieth may glory in the LORD*. And here 'tis opposed to a having Confidence in the *Flesh*; which says plainly that this Rejoycing in *Christ Jesus* is placing all our Confidence and Comfort in him alone. (3.) We must *worship GOD in the Spirit*. In the Strength of that Spirit which *Christ* did purchase for, and bestows on such as do believe on him. We must serve *GOD* in the Way of his own Appointment. Upon these *Terms* is *Christ* offered in

the Gospel: And these must be known. The Knowledge of them is undoubtedly implied in Faith, as well as the Knowledge of Sin and of Christ formerly insisted upon. This leads me to the

4th Thing implied in *believing*, and that is *the Heart's closing with the Gospel Terms* just now mentioned. This is the principal Thing, without which there can be *no Faith, no believing*: For, if we should speak *strictly*, this is Faith, and all the other Things mentioned are only Prerequisites; yet they are such as are not only presupposed to the first Actings of Faith, but must also accompany it, in some Measure, as long as it continues in the Soul, that is, as long as Believers are on Earth. Now this Acceptance of *Christ* upon the Gospel Terms takes in *Three Things*.

(1.) A *Renunciation of all other Things*. Hence it is that Believers are said to have *no Confidence in the Flesh*, that is, they have no Expectation of Relief from any of these Things corrupt Nature is wont to incline us to rely on. The Soul's Motion to *Jesus Christ*, is a Motion from all other Things. The Soul that rolls the Weight of all over upon him, doth not lean to any Thing besides him. All the Expressions formerly opened up, do sufficiently intimate to us, that this Renunciation of all Confidence in other Things belongs to the Nature of Faith, and must go to the Constitution of it: And the same the Scripture plainly enough declares, when it expressly enjoins Sinners this, as a Part of their Duty, or rather expresses the Whole of this Duty by it; *As Hur shall not save us, we will not ride upon*

Horses, nor will we say any more to the Work of our Hands, Ye are our Gods: In vain is Salvation looked for from the Hills, and from the Multitude of Mountains, says the returning Church, Hos. xiv. 3. and Jer. iii. 23. And these Two Texts are a good Commentary upon that forecited Expression of the Apostle, and have no Confidence in the Flesh. To have no Confidence in the Flesh, is to expect no Salvation from the Hills and Multitude of Mountains, from Asbur, from Horses, or the Work of our own Hands.

But that I may be a little more particular, Faith or Believing has in it an expresse Renunciation (1.) *Of our own Wisdom.* Carnal Man is exceedingly inclin'd to trust to his own fleshly Wisdom, which is *Enmity against GOD*, and to advance this as of Use to direct him to true Happiness. This was that which befool'd the heathen World: They thought by their own Wisdom to reach Happiness, to know GOD. But in the Wisdom of GOD, *the World by Wisdom knew not GOD*, and the Believer becomes a Fool *that he may be wise*, perfectly renouncing his own Wisdom, and subscribing himself a Fool; owning himself, with wise *Agur*, more brutish than any Man. (2.) Believing has in it a Renunciation of *our own Strength and Power.* Man is conceited exceedingly of his own Ability. As long as Man has a Leg of his own to walk upon, he is sure never to look near *Christ Jesus*. But no sooner has he a Mind for *Christ*, but presently he confesses his own Impotency. If the Man be able to stand alone, what means he to lean upon another? If he be able to bear his Burden, what needs he

roll it over upon another? (3.) Believing has in it a Renunciation of Man's own *Righteousness*. The natural Man goes about with the carnal Jews; who were ignorant of the *Righteousness* of GOD, to establish his own *Righteousness*, not submitting to the *Righteousness* of GOD: But the Believer rejects this, and owns with the Church, *Isa. lxi. 6.* *We are as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteousness are as filthy Rags.* The Believer sees his *Righteousness* all ragged. He sees, here one Duty wanting, and there another entirely a missing, which makes his *Righteousness* no better than a ragged Coat, which is full of Holes: And he sees what remains to be all defil'd; there is some wanting, and what is not so is filthy. The best fall short of, and are entirely deficient as to the Practice of some Duties; and Filthiness adheres and cleaves to what they do perform: Therefore they renounce their own *Righteousness*. (4.) Believing or Faith in Christ renounces all foreign Relief, I mean Relief from other Things besides Christ. It will not trust to Privileges, to Saints, to any Creature. If any would entice believing Sinners to follow any other, then Faith answers the Tempter as Peter did our LORD, in an Address to Christ himself, *To whom shall we go, thou hast the Words of eternal Life?* Now all these Things are comprehended in that of the Apostle, *Having no Confidence in the Flesh:* And therefore we find him rejecting his own Wisdom, for the Excellence of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, rejecting his own Strength, for Acquaintance with the Power and Efficacy of Christ's Death, renouncing his own *Righteousness*,

ness, that he might be found in *Christ* ; and counting all the Privileges he had as one of *Abraham's Children*, one in Covenant with *GOD*, one of the strictest Sect of the *Jews*, to be but *Loss and Dung* for an Interest in *Christ*.

(2.) There is in believing on *Christ*, a *Consent of Will to the Terms of the Gospel* as good and desirable. And who can refuse this save such as are blind. The Gospel Terms may be reduced, as has been hinted just now, to *Three*. (1.) Seek not Salvation from that which cannot save you. Have no Confidence in the *Flesh*. (2.) Take freely whatever ye need. Need ye Righteousness, or need ye Strength, or need ye Wisdom, or Redemption? All these ye may have freely in *Christ*, who is made of *GOD* to all them that believe, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*; in whom all Believers have *Righteousness and Strength*; in whom all the Seed of *Israel* by this Means, shall be justified and glorified. This is to rejoyce in *Christ Jesus*. (3.) Lay out and improve what ye receive. Ye are not bid spin a Web out of your own Bowels ; but ye are bid improve what's given to you. Ye are bid worship *GOD in Spirit* ; ay, but 'tis by the Assistance and Direction of the Spirit that's given freely. The Will closes with these Terms as good and agreeable : And who could refuse to do so, were there not in him the carnal Mind that's *Furious against GOD*. The World can conceive nothing more reasonable, no Terms more encouraging, favourable and condescending than these; therefore they are embraced as worthy the Love, Goodness, Mercy and Wisdom of *GOD*.

3. Hereon there ensues an *Acquiescence and Rest of Soul in Christ Jesus for Salvation*. The Sinner is no more toss'd in perplexing Enquiries after a Saviour. Now it fixes upon him, according to the Proposal made of himself; and it will not look near any other Thing. It has tried them, and found no Rest in them. Now it comes where it finds Rest; and therefore here the Soul is in a bless'd *Composure*. It has Confidence in *Christ Jesus*, rejoyceth in him, and glories in him. If Conscience challenge for Sin, it points it to Christ Jesus, and lets it see what he has done, and seeks no other Answer to Conscience. If the Threats of the Law set themselves against the Sinner, he gets in behind Christ's Righteousness to skreen him, and here he thinks himself secure: Therefore he will not betake himself to any Thing else. He rests in this as safe; and seeks not any other Thing to shelter him from the Wrath of GOD, to fit him for every good Word and Work. Thus we have opened up in some Measure to you the Nature of Faith, sufficiently in order to our present Design. We proceed now

V. To enquire *what this Salvation is*, which a convinced Sinner believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ* shall assuredly obtain. Upon the former Verse we did observe, that this Word is taken in a lax Sense, not only for a *Deliverance from Evils*, but for a *Collation of good Things*: That is plainly, it takes in all that's requisite in order to reinstate the Sinner in that happy Condition whence *Adam* fell, or even into a better; so that Salvation and eternal Life do not much differ. Now here I shall first enquire what Salvation thus ta-

ken implies, and then name some of its Properties.

As to the *First*, Salvation implies these *Three* Particulars, to which all others may be easily reduc'd.

1. *Deliverance from Wrath*. Sin deserves Wrath: The Sinner sees it a coming, and feels its Beginning, which makes him see for Refuge from the Wrath to come. Thus it was with the *Jaylor* in the *Text*: He was like a Man going abroad, who feels the Beginnings of a bitter Storm, and sees the Clouds gathering, which portends a heavy Deluge; and not being able to abide the very Beginnings of it, he timeously betakes himself to a Covert; he runs to seek Shelter from the Storm. So this awakened Sinner feels some of the Drops, as it were, of the Wrath of GOD in his Face already; and he knows he is not able to abide any more, and therefore cries out, *What must I do to be saved?* Where shall I get Shelter? And here his Question is answered, *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved*. He will skreen thee from that Storm of Wrath, that has begun to fall down with so great Violence.

2. It implies a *Title to Life eternal*. The Man would be happy; and how he shall be so, he cannot tell. He fears he may never attain to it, and this pains him. Once Man was on a fair Way to eternal Life; but now he is far out of it, and never like to obtain it. This makes the poor awakened Man shiver, and cry out, *What must I do to be saved?* I cannot think of falling short of Happiness: How shall I come at it? *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved*. There's the

the Answer : Thou shalt have a *Title* to eternal Life ; for *he that believeth the Record that GOD hath given of his Son, putteth to his Seal that GOD is true.* And this is the Record that GOD hath given of his Son, that there is *Life eternal in him,* and that *he that hath the Son hath Life,* 1 John v. 11, 12.

3. It implies a *full Possession of this Life eternal,* and perfect Deliverance. *What must I do to be saved ?* How shall I get out of Harm's Way, be meet for, and be actually possess'd of that *Inheritance that's incorruptible and undefil'd, and fades not away.* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved : Ye shall be made meet for, nay, put in actual Possession of this blessed Inheritance, and saved from all these Dangers that ly in the Way. Ye shall be kept by the Power of GOD through Faith unto Salvation, and shall receive the End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls, 1 Pet. i. 5, 9. Thus have we given some Account, in the general, what Salvation implies. We shall now proceed to give some Account of its Properties, whereby we shall see further into its Nature.

Many Properties of this Salvation might be nam'd and insisted on ; were it needful we should enquire into them all. I shall satisfy my self to name and insist a little on a few of the more considerable Properties of it, And

1. 'Tis a great Salvation. So the Spirit of GOD expressly calls it, Heb. ii. 2, 3. *If the Word Spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great Sa'venation,*

which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. And indeed if we shall take a View of it, we shall find it deserves the Title or Character given of it. 'Tis called *great Salvation*, and it is so,

(1.) In regard of its *Contrivance*. 'Tis not a Thing that falls out by Chance, without any Project, Forecast or Forethought : No, but 'tis one of the *deep Contrivances of Heaven*. 'Tis the Masterpiece of divine Wisdom. There was much Wisdom in the Contrivance of the World, much in the Creation of Man, much appears in the Works of Providence: But infinitely more in this. The *manifest Wisdom of GOD* is to be seen in the Salvation of the Church, *Eph. iii. 10*. Wisdom lies in proposing right Ends to one's self in acting, and finding out and using suitable Means, and ordering all the Circumstances of Action to the best Advantage. Now, all these Parts of Wisdom are eminent in this Salvation.

Never was there a more noble End than what GOD had in the Salvation of the Church. (1.) What more *suitable to GOD* than that he should glorify his *Mercy and Grace*, the only Attributes which before the Fall of Man had not been glorified in any remarkable Instance? GOD had made his infinite *Wisdom, Power and Godhead* legible in the Creation of the World. His *moral Perfections* were copied out in the Souls of Men, and in the Nature of Angels. Thence one might learn, that GOD was glorious in Holiness, Goodness, Bounty, Justice, and all other moral Perfections: But all the while there was no Vestige,

LORD, *no Footstep of Mercy*; nor could there be, till once Sin entred into the World. *Vindictive Justice* was eminent in the miserable State of fallen Angels, who were justly plung'd into remediless Ruin and Destruction; only Mercy seem'd vail'd and hid. There was nothing by which this *darling Attribute* could be known, or GOD receive any Glory on the account of it. It was not seen in either the Works of *Creation* or *Providence*: Nay, there seem'd by these no Room for it; since upon Supposition of the Fall, where only there was Access for it, the Door seem'd perfectly shut against its Appearance, by the *Peremptoriness* of the Threatning, *In the Day thou eatest thou shalt surely die*. And indeed Man had all the Reason in the World to believe it should be so, not only from the *Veracity* of GOD, but from the sad and lamentable Proof of GOD's *holy Severity*, that was given in the Ruin of the Angels that sinn'd. (2.) What more *worthy the great Lawgiver of the World*, than to make it appear to the Conviction of all, that the Laws he at first fram'd, were exactly suited to the Ends of Government, the *Glory*, the *Safety*, the *Comfort* and *Peace* of the Subjects, and the *Honour* of the Governor? This End surely, if any other, was worthy of God the Lawgiver of the World; and this he had in View in the Salvation of the Church; and this he obtains by this Means. The Obedience of the Son of GOD proclaims that 'tis Man's *Honour* to obey: The Peace that his People, when renew'd by his Grace, do find in Obedience, proclaims it their *Interest* to obey; the Pain they suffer in the Ways of Sin, speaks all

all the Calumnies cast upon the Ways and Laws of GOD, abominably false. (3.) What End more suitable for him, who had undertaken the *Protection* of his Subjects, which is unquestionably a Part of a Governor's Business and Work, than to give an eminent Proof of his *Abilities* for defeating the most crafty and subtil *Plots*, and breaking the greatest *Force* of his and his People's Enemies? And this is done in a signal Manner, in the Salvation of the Church. (4.) What more suitable End for him, who had all the jarring Elements to manage, all the opposite Tendencies of Things to govern, and direct to one common End, than to give a Proof of his wonderful Skill in reconciling the *seemingly opposite* and irreconcilable *Interests* of *Justice* and *Mercy*? Never was there any End more noble, more suitable than that which GOD had in View, in the Contrivance of this Salvation. He design'd to *complete the Discovery* he gave of his Attributes, to *honour* his Laws, to *expose* the Folly and Weakness of his great Enemy, to shew his glorious Wisdom in composing the greatest Difference, reconciling the most seemingly cross and irreconcilable Interests of Justice and Mercy.

Thus we see the *End* was wise: Nor were the Means, and the *timing of the Means* less so. Much of Wisdom was there laid out in *fitting* the Person of the Redeemer, to open a Door for the Glorification of the Grace, Mercy and Love of GOD, to repair the Honour of GOD's Law and of his Authority, to baffle Satan's Power and Policy, and to reconcile and amicably compose

pose the opposite Interests of spotless Justice and tender Mercy. Much of Wisdom shines in the *timing* of this Discovery, and in the *Application* of it. Well might it be called *manifold Wisdom* that shines herein. And justly may that Salvation which is thus wisely contrived be called *great*, in respect of that Wisdom which did contrive it.

(2.) This is indeed a great Salvation, and cannot but be so, if we consider the *Author* of it, *GOD, the great GOD*. He it is who contrived, and claims the Honour of the *Accomplishment* of this Work, of the Salvation of the Church as his due: And this Honour is given him cordially by all those who are saved. They find themselves obliged to own all other Things unable for *contriving* or for *effectuating* a Work so great as is the Salvation of Sinners. *In vain is Salvation looked for from the Hills, and from the Multitude of Mountains; in the LORD alone is the Salvation of his People*, Jer. iii. 23. And this Acknowledgment of the Church is consonant to that Declaration which GOD gives, *Isa. xlv. 21—There is no GOD else beside me, a just GOD and a Saviour, there is none beside me*. All the Persons of the glorious Trinity have their distinct Hand and Concernment in this Salvation. The first Proposal is owing to the Love of the Father, the *Accomplishment* of it to the Son, and the *Application* of it to the Spirit. Sure it must be a great Work indeed, a great Salvation that busied the Thoughts of the blessed Trinity from all Eternity, and employed, if I may so speak, their Hands in
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Time. And such is the Salvation we speak of.

(3.) 'Tis a great Salvation, if we consider *the Way of its Accomplishment*, the Means whereby it is brought about; and these were the wonderful great Condescension of the SON of GOD, humbling himself so far, as to take upon him the *Form of a Servant*, of sinful Man, *Philip. ii. 6, 7.* his inexpressibly great *Sufferings* in Soul and Body, and the *exceeding Greatness* of *his mighty Power* put forth in the *Application* of these great Things which were purchased, not with Things of so small a Price, so inconsiderable as Silver or Gold, or such corruptible Dross, but *with the precious Blood of Christ*, 1 Pet. i. 18.

(4.) 'Tis great Salvation, if we consider the *Manner of its Publication*. GOD himself brought the first News of it to *Adam*, and did afterwards upon several Occasions carry on the Discovery, by adding to that first Revelation, and giving new Beams of Light to it, as the various Occasions of the Church did require, *Heb. ii. 2, 3.* But that which is most remarkable, and of greatest Consideration, is that the Publication of this was a Part of the Work which a *humbled GOD*, while tabernacled amongst Men, took to himself; he went about *preaching Salvation*.

(5.) This Salvation deserves to be called great, if we take a *View of the great Evils* we are hereby *liberate and saved from*. (1.) Hereby we are saved from great *Pollutions*. We are all by Nature as black, as filthy as Hell; we have by Sin

debased our selves to Hell; we are so filthy that GOD, the holy GOD, cannot look upon us without Abhorrence; we are abominate by the holy Angels, and even by our selves, when our Eyes are opened. There is so much Filthiness in every *Sinner*, as is sufficient to make him lothe himself, if he but saw himself. *Job*, who had as great a Testimony given him by GOD, the best Judge as ever Man had, yet *lothes and abhors himself*, when GOD lets him see himself. Must not that be great Filthiness that makes not only GOD, the holy GOD, lothe Man; but even Man, sinful polluted Man, abominate himself? And is it not a great *Salvation* to be saved from so great Filthiness? sure it is. 'Tis a Filthiness that the Nitre and Sope of human Endeavours has many Times been tried upon, but to no Purpose. Nothing can wash out the Stain but the Blood of GOD: And to be saved from such Filthiness, is a Mercy of no small Consideration: 'Tis indeed great *Salvation*. (2.) 'Tis Salvation from the Guilt of *Sin*. Sin carries in it an Obligation to Punishment: *Rom. viii. 1.* It ties Sin and Punishment together; and consequently is like a strong Chain whereby the Sinner is bound to Destruction, so fast that he cannot get away from it. He is tied to Hell; and sure when one finds himself thus knit to Destruction, he will think it a great Salvation to be saved from it, to have this Knot loosed. (3.) 'Tis Salvation from the *Dominion of Sin*. Sin is a great Tyrant, and imposes a most heavy and intolerable Yoke upon all its Vassals. We may see what a Tyrant it is, by the

the many tragical Events with which the World is daily filled. We see some Kingdoms soked in Blood, some Families buried in Contempt, some Men ruined in their Reputation, others in their Bodies, others in their Estates: And if we enquire who has done all this Mischief; we shall find that Sin has done it all. It has made one Part of a Nation imbrue their Hands in their Neighbours Blood; it has hurried Men upon these foolish and hurtful Practices, whereby they have ruined their Families, their Estates, their Names, their Souls, their Bodies. Sure then Salvation from the Reign and Dominion of this insufferable Tyrant, deserves to be stil'd *great Salvation*. (4.) 'Tis Salvation from the *molesting Power of the Remainders of Sin that dwells in Believers*: And this is great Salvation. So grievous are the Workings, Stirrings, Motions of this Enemy, that it makes the Children of GOD many Times look upon themselves as wretched, and cry out with the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* And to be freed from that which makes a Man account himself miserable and wretched, is certainly a *great Salvation*. (5.) 'Tis Salvation from the *Wrath of GOD*; and how great a Mercy is this? *Who knows the Power of his Wrath?* And who knows how great a Deliverance it is to be saved from the Wrath to come? Such only can who have their Eyes opened, to see the Danger they are in from the Imminency of the Whirlwind of the LORD's Anger, that goes forth with Fury, and falls with Pain upon the Head

Head of the Wicked. (6.) 'Tis Salvation from *Satan's Slavery*: And sure to be saved from his *Slavery* is a great Salvation indeed. He *rules in the Children of Disobedience*: And where he reigns he never treats one of his *Slaves* better, than he did that poor Child, of whom we have an Account in the Evangelists. He takes them and tears them, and bruises them, throwing them sometimes into the Fire, and sometimes into the Water, Matth. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 17. Luke ix. 39. He runs them into very different Evils, Fire and Water, but equally destructive to their Life. And to be saved from such Treatment, from such an Enemy, is surely a great *Salvation*; and will easily be acknowledged such, by all who know how great a Misery it is to be under such a Yoke. (7.) 'Tis *Salvation from the Sting of Death*, and from the Fear of Death. We read of some that *all their Lifetime have been in Bondage through Fears of Death*, Heb. ii. 15. Where 'tis likewise declared a Part of Christ's Undertaking, to deliver such. *Forasmuch then as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood*, he also himself likewise took Part of the same, that through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage. Whoever takes a View of these Evils, which this Salvation and Deliverance has a Respect to, cannot but own it a great Salvation.

(6.) To add no more Considerations for the Illustration of this Property, it must be owned to be a great Salvation, if we consider what
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are the *Advantages that follow upon our Deliverance* from these Evils mentioned. I only name a few of them. (1.) Instead of these filthy Robes which Sinners are naturally clothed in, they are clad in *Garments of Salvation, Garments of Righteousness*. I will, says the Church, *Isa. lxi. 10. greatly rejoyce in the LORD, my Soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her self with Jewels*. (2.) This Salvation has in it a *Title to a noble Inheritance*. Guilt is the Sinner's, the unfaved Wretch's Title to Wrath; it makes it sure to him: But such as are saved, are made Sons upon their Believing, *John i. 12. And if Sons, then Heirs, Heirs of GOD, and joynt Heirs with Christ, Rom. iii. 17*. (3.) They who are Partakers of this Salvation, are put under the *Dominion of Grace*. They are not under Sin, but under the *Dominion of Grace, Rom. vi. 14*. And where Grace bears Sway, there is indeed perfect Liberty. Faith working by Love, is the Spring of all the Obedience they perform to these Commands which are not grievous, but, on the contrary, are pleasant, and have not only a great Reward in the Issue, but even in the Time wherein Obedience is performed to them; see *Gal. v. 6. 1 John v. 3. Prov. iii. 17. Psal. xix. 11*. (4.) *The Spirit dwells in all Believers*, and abides with him for ever, *1 John iv. 13. Rom. viii. 9*. And hereby a Relief is provided against that Uneasiness that arises from the Reminders of Sin here; for *through the Spirit Believers*

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do mortify the Deeds of the Body; that so they may live, *Rom. viii. 13.* And by the abounding of the Fruits of the Spirit, they are brought to that Frame, that spiritual Mindedness, which is Life and Peace, *Rom. viii. 6.* And not only is there by the Indwelling of the Spirit Provision thus made against the remaining Power of indwelling Sin here; but moreover hereby there is Assurance given of full Freedom from it. The Spirit will at length entirely cleanse the Soul; And he is the *Earnest of Glory*, of that State where Believers are entirely freed from Sin, *2 Cor. v. 5.* It is by him they are sealed to the Day of their final and complete *Redemption* from Sin in all its Concernments, Filth, Guilt, Reign, Power and Being, *Ephes. iv. 30.* (5.) Instead of Wrath, under which the Sinner was lying, by this Salvation he is brought into a State of Favour and Acceptance with GOD through the Beloved, *Ephes. i. 6.* Instead of War with Heaven they have Peace; for being justified by Faith they have Peace with GOD, *Rom. viii. 1.* And of how great Consideration this is the Psalmist well understood; who *Psal. xxx. v.* tells us, *That in GOD's Favour is Life*; and *Psal. lxxiii. 3.* That his loving Kindness is better than Life. (6.) Satan's Slave is placed upon a Throne; by this Salvation: And is not this a great Privilege? Sure it is; and this is the Privilege of all Overcomers, and such shall all Believers be. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne,* *Rev. iii. penult.* (7.) Instead of feared Death, everlasting Life shall be the Privilege of the Nations.

of them that are saved, John iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life*; and here we may hold. All Words are for ever lost: Who can tell what Life this is? A Life of GOD, a Life of Comfort, a Life of Promise in Heaven; and such a Life for ever. May we not conclude from the Whole, That this Salvation, which is the Contrivance of so great Wisdom, has so great an Author as GOD, is brought about by so great Means, proclaimed by so great a Person as the only begotten of the Father, frees from so great Evils, and entitles to so great Blessings, is indeed a great Salvation? Proceed we now to a

2d Property of this Salvation. As it is upon the Accounts mentioned, and not a few others, a great Salvation, so likewise is it a complete Salvation. 'Tis called *Salvation to the uttermost*, Heb. vii. 25. *He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD by him*. Now the Completeness of this Salvation we may take up in Four Particulars. (1.) 'Tis Salvation from all Evils. 'Tis not only, as we did at length make appear under the former Head, Salvation from many, from great Evils; but 'tis Salvation from all Evils. It extends to all Sorts of Evils. We might mention many Sorts of Evils; but they are all easily reducible to Two moral Evils or Sins, penal Evils or Punishment. Now this Salvation extends to both. 'Tis Salvation from all Sin: *The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin*, 1 John i. 7. 'Tis Justification from all Things, Acts xiii. 39. *Be it known to you therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this Man is preached*

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preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all Things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. And if we be saved from all moral Evils, Salvation from all others follows in Course.

(2.) 'Tis Salvation from all Degrees of all those Evils. It might have extended to all Sorts of Evils, and yet not have comprehended a Deliverance from all Degrees of them: But 'tis complete in this Respect; as the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin, so it cleanseth from every Degree: It cleanseth fully. As the Spirit of Christ is able to subdue all Sin, so is he able to subdue all Sin fully. In a Word, Christ makes thorough Work of it; and such as do believe shall be saved from all their Fears, from all their Enemies, from all their Sins, and all their Sorrows, Christ will present them without Spot or Wrinkle or any such Thing. No Stain, no Blemish shall be left on them before he have done with them. (3.) 'Tis comprehensive of all spiritual Blessings, nay, of every good Thing; GOD will give Grace and Glory, and he will withhold no good Thing from them that walk uprightly, Psal. lxxxiv.

1. And Believers are said to be blessed with all spiritual Blessings in Christ Jesus, Ephes. i. 3.

4.) It comprehends all these Blessings in their perfection. While in this World the Enjoyments of the Saints are not complete; but they shall be so ere it be long. Grace will ripen into Glory. That which is in part will be done away, and that which is perfect will come in its Room.

3dly. This is a suitable Salvation. How suitable it is to GOD, we have hinted already;

and therefore I shall only name a few Things which may evince its Congruity to such poor Sinners as are convinced of their Need of Salvation. And

(1.) This Salvation is exceedingly suitable to such a poor Sinner, because *'tis near*. One that is in a great Extremity, to tell him of a Remedy in some far Country, at a great Distance, will rather increase than help his Disquietment. Such a Remedy, may he say, is sufficient, but how shall it be got? who will bring it to me? and may I not be dead and gone before it arrive? So might the convinced Sinner say. Did we tell him of a Saviour that were to be met withal in some remote Country, or after the Course of some Years, his Perplexity would hereby be increased: His Case requires *speedy Relief*; it will not admit of long Delays: And this Salvation is exactly adapted to his Condition; as the Apostle shews, *Rom. x. 6. The Righteousness which is of Faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine Heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, who shall descend into the Deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the Dead?)* 8. *But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that is the Word of Faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that GOD hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* This Salvation is near in the Offer; 'tis near in its Advantages. As the Offer brings it close home so the Advantage of it is presently to be obtained. The Taylor soon got Ease, and so may every

very convinced Sinner in the same Method ; he may obtain, if not present *Satisfaction*, yet present Safety.

(2.) This Salvation in its Terms is suited to the Needs and Desires of a convinced Sinner. He cannot purchase Salvation ; therefore Salvation freely offered is suitable to him. If Money were required of such as come to the Market of Grace, the Sinner would never look near it : But when all that need are bid come, and take and have all, *without Money and without Price* ; then he finds a Market to his Mind, Salvation according to Wish, perfectly such as he would have.

(3.) 'Tis suitable in its Nature to his *Wants*. As 'tis Salvation upon the very Terms he wishes, so all the Blessings he needs are to be had upon these Terms : Needs he *Pardon* ? he may have it ; needs he *Repentance* ? he may have it. In a Word, if he needs *Grace* or *Glory*, he may have them.

(4.) The *Security* offer'd is suitable to the very Desires of such an One. The convinc'd Sinner is now deeply sensible of the Concern, Moment, and Importance of Salvation ; and therefore he would not willingly hazard it upon a small Security. He would not venture so much upon some weak Probability, he would have the highest Security in this Matter, which is of the highest Importance. And what greater Security can he desire for his Salvation, than God's Covenant and Promise confirmed by his Oath ?

4thly. This Salvation is call'd *eternal Salvation*, Isa. xlv. 17. *But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting Salvation: Ye shall not be a-*

shamed nor confounded World without End. And we are told, *Heb. v. 9. That Christ being made perfect through Sufferings, is become the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him.* 'Tis eternal Salvation upon a *threefold Account.* (1.) 'Tis Salvation eternal in its *Design* and *Contrivance*, the Fruit and Product of everlasting Love. The *Father's* drawing Sinners, in Time, into a Compliance with the Terms of Salvation, is the Fruit of everlasting Love, *Jer. xxxi. 3. The LORD appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn thee.* (2.) 'Tis everlasting Salvation, because it is Salvation from everlasting Evils. *He that believes not shall be damned;* that is, as the Spirit of GOD comments upon it elsewhere, *he shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the LORD, and the Glory of his Power,* 2 *Thess. i. 9.* (3.) 'Tis eternal Salvation, because it entitles to, and puts Man in Possession of eternal Blessings. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life,* John iii. 36. Thus have we seen what this Salvation is, in it self, and in its Properties. We proceed

VI. To demonstrate the Truth of the Doctrine, that such as do berake themselves by Faith unto, or believe on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, shall assuredly be saved : And this we make good,

1. From the eternal and immutable Purpose of GOD, that he that believes shall be saved. Great Contests there have been among Christians about the Decrees of GOD ; but scarce ever any yet had the Confidence to alledge that GOD had not decreed this. Such as will allow least to the

he Decrees of GOD, are forc'd to own that he has purpos'd in himself, that he that believes shall be saved: And when GOD has purpos'd so, who can contradict, or who can make him fall short of whatever he has purpos'd? Since 'tis unquestionable from the Revelation that GOD hath made of his Will, that he has purpos'd the Salvation of all that do believe, it must of Necessity be so that such shall infallibly be saved. Could any Believer fall short of his Happiness, of the Salvation which GOD has purpos'd in himself to bestow on him, it must flow from One of Two, either a *Change* in God's Purpose, or God's *falling short* of his Intent: But neither of the Two can possibly be. (1.) As for GOD's Purpose, it must of Necessity be unchangeable like himself; *He is God, and changes not*, Mal. iii. 6. Should GOD change, he would lose his Name *I am that I am*. Upon this Ground it is that the wise Man says, Eccl. iii. 14. *I know that whatever GOD doth, it shall be for ever.* GOD is the *Father of Lights*, with whom there is no *Variable-ness*, neither *Shadow of turning*, James i. 17. That Man is changeable in his Purpose, flows from his *Weakness*, and from his *Ignorance of Events*. His Purposes are founded upon a *Supposition*, or at most a *Probability* that Things shall be so and so; and when Things fall out otherwise than was expected, Man must suit his Purposes to the State of Things. But the Matter is far otherwise with GOD, who doth not therefore purpose to act so and so, because he seeth such Things will fall out; but Things fall out so, because GOD purpos'd in himself that they

should so fall out. All Things are wrought by him according to the Counsel of his own Will; and *known to him are all his Works from the Beginning.* Again, Man changes his Purpose, because he knows not at first what's best to be done; but the Matter is nothing so with GOD. (2.) As for the Event of the Purpose, that must be infallible. GOD cannot fall short of his Purpose, if we will take his own Word on't. *The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth, but the Word of our GOD shall stand for ever, Isa. xl. 8.* And again, *I am GOD, and there is none else; I am GOD, and there is none like me; declaring the End from the Beginning, and from ancient Times the Things that are not yet done; saying, My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure, Isa. xli. 9, 10.* And well may he say he will do so, since none is able to resist his Will; he that doth it, must first grapple with Omnipotence. *The LORD of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disanul it? his Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Isa. xiv. 27. If he works, who can let? Isa. xliii. 13.* None can stay his Hand, or say unto him, *What dost thou?* Dan. iv. 45. What is then purposed by GOD must be infallibly certain, That such as do by Faith betake themselves to Jesus Christ, shall be saved.

2. The Faithfulness of GOD in the Promise is engaged for it: So runs the Promise, *He that believes shall be saved.* When a Man's Purpose is not declared, he is indeed accountable to himself for any Change or Alteration of it, but not to others; but if he declare it openly, especially if he turn his Purpose into a Promise, in that Case

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he is brought under a more publick and Solemn Tie to stand firmly to what is engaged. So, had this been a Purpose conceal'd in the Breast of GOD, if I may so speak, however he himself should have been engaged for its Accomplishment, yet we had in that Case nothing to say: But GOD by his Promise makes himself a *Debtor*; such is his Condescension to his own Creatures. GOD cannot suffer a Believer to fall short of Salvation, as Matters are now stated, unless he thereby fall into Disgrace and Contempt; which is as impossible, as 'tis for him to resign his Godhead. Certain therefore it is, upon the account of the Promise of GOD, that a lost Sinner betaking himself by Faith to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, shall be saved. This will appear indeed of great Weight, if it be considered, (1.) That there is not only a *Promise*, but a *Covenant*. (2.) That this Covenant has *Seals* appended to it, for the Ratification of it. (3.) That *Christ* is the *Surety* of this Covenant. (4.) That all the Blessings promised, are *bought by Christ* at no lower Rate than that of his own Blood. (5.) What he has purchased, he made over in a *testamentary Way*, by way of Legacy, to Believers. (6.) This Testament being *confirmed by the Death of the Testator*, there is no altering of it. (7.) The Holy Spirit, if I may so speak, is left *Executor of his latter Will*; therefore 'tis utterly impossible that any Believer should miss of Salvation. These Things we have only nam'd, because we hasten to the Improvement of this Truth; which we shall come to, after we have handled a

3d Argument for Proof of the Truth under Consideration, and that is taken from the *Experience of such as do believe*. And because this Argument is, it may be, less understood, therefore I shall insist somewhat the more largely upon it. That I may prove it certain that Believers are saved, from Experience, I shall enquire,
 1. *What it is, that such as do believe experience?*
 2. *How we know that they do so?* for their Experience signifies nothing to us, unless it be made known in such a way as may give it some Weight.

As to the *First*, we say (1.) All Believers, at *Death*, do attain the full Possession of this great, complete, suitable, and eternal Salvation: They enter into Rest, being conducted safe to Glory, by the glorious Captain of his People's Salvation. But this is not that which we principally design to insist upon, as an Evidence of the Certainty of the Salvation of such as do believe: Wherefore we say (2.) That such as do believe, *even in this Life*, have some Experience of this Salvation upon their believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ*. We do not say indeed, that all Believers have the *same Degrees* of Experience, or can give alike *distinct* Account of their Experiences: But this we say, That all who do believe, upon their believing have some Experience; and such as are diligent, and do carefully improve that Spirit which is given them, whereby they may know the Things that are freely given them of GOD, may understand in some Measure, if not all, yet most of the Experiences we shall mention. Ye may easily understand, from what has been at
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great Length discoursed to you, that this Salvation comprehends a *Deliverance from Evil*, and a *Grant of all that's good*. Now we shall name some Experiences that Believers upon their believing obtain, both of the one, and of the other.

(1.) Then, Such as do by Faith receive *Jesus Christ*, upon their believing have a gracious Experience of a *begun Deliverance from Wrath*. Whereas, before their believing they were under *Fears of Wrath*, and saw themselves in imminent Danger of inevitable Ruin, so that they were much disquieted; now, upon their believing, they find something of a blessed Calm. True it is indeed, they do not always presently find Rest, full Rest I mean; yet, upon their Reception of *Christ*, there is ever some *Beginnings of Rest*, and somewhat of a begun Deliverance from these cruciating and tormenting Fears, which formerly did appear intolerable. The Case of a Believer, at such a Time, may be like that of a Man, who, falling over a dreadful Precipice, gets hold of something which he is sure is able to support him: Such an one, tho' he be in some Degree free from that dreadful Fear which he was under, may yet be under some Apprehensions of Danger from his own Inability to hold the Grip he has gotten. Just so is it with a poor convinc'd Sinner: At some Times, before Christ is discovered, he is in the most lamentable Case imaginable; he finds himself falling headlong into Ruin and Misery, and this frights him terribly; he sees the Pit beneath him, and finds himself hastning thither; and therefore is in a dread-

dreadful Consternation, while there is *nothing but a fearful looking for of Wrath and fiery Indignation*: While he is in this Case, *Christ* is discovered to him; he sees him sufficient to save him, and understands on what Terms he may have him; he is pleas'd with them, and lays hold on *Christ*; and thence there ensue some Beginnings of Rest, tho' he may still be in some Fears that he may lose the Grip: And this *begun Deliverance* from the Fears of Wrath, is a *Pledge* of that full and complete Freedom which he has Ground to expect.

(2.) Sinners upon their believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ* have some Experience of *begun Salvation from the Dominion of Sin*. The Law of the Spirit of Life in *Christ Jesus* makes them free, in some Measure, from the Law of Sin and Death, Rom. viii. 2. I know indeed there may be greater Complaints of Sin after believing than ever, and its Power may be felt more than formerly; yet every one that truly doth believe, has some Experience of a begun Deliverance from the Reign and Dominion of Sin. However Sin may make *more Stir* in the Soul, yet it has not so much Power as formerly. Now there is not that willing Compliance with it, as formerly there was, in all its Commands: Now its Title is disputed, its Commands are rejected; and when any of them are complied withal, there is a Force put upon the Soul in its so doing.

(3.) They experience some *Beginnings of a Deliverance from the Guilt and Filth of Sin in their Approaches to GOD*. Before, when they heard of GOD, they were like *Adam* ready to run away and

and hide themselves : They were afraid to look him in the Face : But now they begin to feel some more Confidence in their Approaches to GOD. They draw near, and are not so frightened, nay, they have some Hopes as to the Issue of these their Approaches to GOD. These and many such Experiences of a begun Salvation from Evils have all Believers, if they would be at Pains to observe them.

(4.) They likewise have some Experiences of *the Freedom of Christ's Subjects*. They find a Freedom in the Service of GOD ; it becomes *natural* and *easy* to them. They find not Obedience so hurtful as once they thought it ; nay, now they find a Delight and Refreshment in it, which is indeed something of the Beginnings of that Satisfaction with GOD's Likeness, which is to be completed fully in Heaven.

(5.) They experience many Times *the Beginnings of Heaven* in some refreshing Tastes of the gracious Communications and Intimations of GOD's Love to their Souls. In fine, all of them upon their believing do experience in less or in more, *Christ* as their *Hope of Glory* in their Hearts. Some Dawnings of Hope there are in the darkest and most disconsolate Believer that lives : For where there is no Hope, there can be no Use of Means ; 'tis *Hope* of Success that's the *Spring* of Action.

These and many such Experiences do even the weakest Believers some time or other find. That they are not more clearly discern'd, to the Comfort of such as have them, is, past all Peradventure, in a great Measure owing to their
own

own Negligence and Want of Observation. Now these Things are Evidences of the Truth under Consideration: When Sinners upon their believing do experience the Beginnings of that Salvation which GGD has promis'd them, they may comfortably and without any Hesitation wait for its Completion, expecting firmly that he who has begun that Work will complete it, that he who has begun the Accomplishment of his Promises will in due Time fully accomplish them. Now these Experiences being of no Use for proving the Truth to others, unless they can be known satisfyingly by them. We shall

Secondly shew, in a Word, how we come to know that Believers do find such Things upon their believing. And this we do

(1.) By the Account we have of the Experiences of Believers in the *Word* of GOD. To go no further than the *Text*, who more frightened, who more terribly shaken, and under greater Horror than the Jaylor, when he is trembling and putting the Question, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Well, what becomes of him afterward, when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ? Look to the 34th Verse of this Chapter, and there we shall find him *rejoicing and believing*. The like Account have we of these who were *pricked in their Hearts*, and cried out, *Men and Brethren, what must we do?* Acts ii. 37. As perplex'd as they then were, yet upon their believing the State of their Affairs was perfectly altered; for *they did eat their Meat with Gladness and Singleness of Heart, praising GOD, and having Favour with all the People,* Ver. 46, 47.

(2.) We

(2.) We may know this, as from the Testimony of GOD, so from the Testimony of Believers in our Day. Tho' there be but few, yet we hope there are not wanting some, who will readily and cheerfully give in their Testimony to the same Truth, and own that upon their believing they have had some Experience of the Things mentioned, and of not a few which we have not mentioned.

(3.) Tho' they should hold their Peace, yet we might even with our Eyes see the Truth of what is asserted. Have we not sometimes seen some graceless and even profane Wretches, who have been mad upon their own Ways, stopt in their Progress and Career? Has not the LORD shaken them, and filled them with his Terrors? And has not this Course of believing calm'd them? Have they not visibly been delivered from these Fears of Wrath, which had gone to such a Degree? Has it not been clearly seen, that they were freed from that Dominion of Sin under which they formerly lived? Surely these Things are obvious Proofs that, upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, such Persons have been made Partakers of some Beginnings of this great Salvation, and that as an Earnest of the Whole. Several other Things might have been added for Proof of this great Truth; but passing them, we shall now come to make some practical Improvement of this great Truth.

In the Improvement of this Truth, we shall first draw some general doctrinal Inferences; and then

then proceed to *Trial*, which will lead us into a more close and particular Application.

Is it so then, That a convinced Sinner believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ* shall assuredly be saved? Then.

1. We may hence infer, *That Faith is a most valuable Blessing*. Well might the Apostle call it *precious Faith*, 1 Pet. i. 1. for not only is it precious in *its self*, but 'tis unspeakably so in respect of its *Consequents*. It, like a Chain, draws *Christ* and all his Purchase after it: 'Tis big with many and great Mercies. There are great and precious Promises fraught with the great and *precious Blessings* of the Gospel, nay, with *Christ* himself; and precious Faith lays hold upon the Promises of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come, of *Grace* and *Glory*, and makes them all ours.

2. We may safely hence infer likewise, *That the preaching of the Word is a great Blessing*; since *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of GOD*: The Whole of this the *Apostle* plainly enough declares, Rom. x. 13. *Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus, shall be saved*. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher?

3. Then we may infer, that *such as do believe, whatever their Circumstances may be at present, are in an unspeakably happy Condition*. They have an Interest in the great Salvation; and what Losses will not this compensate and make up? How rich are they, who have Heaven and all the

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the Means leading to it, as theirs? They have a good Title to, and shall at length be actually possess'd of that rich Inheritance of the Saints in Light, *Jam. ii. 5.* Harken, my beloved Brethren, hath not GOD chosen the poor of this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

4. *Assurance of Salvation is attainable.* If Salvation be sure upon our believing, then we may be fully assured of Salvation; for one may know certainly whether he believes or not, whether he be content to accept of and close with the Lord *Jesus Christ* upon his own Terms. This is not only knowable, but it may be more easily discern'd than most do apprehend. Were we but, with any Measure of Seriousness and Concern, turning our Eyes inward, we could not but know how our Hearts stand affected toward *Christ* and the Gospel-method of Salvation: But of this more afterwards.

5. *Perseverance in Faith is not the Condition* of Salvation, or at least that which founds our Title to it: For whoever believes shall be saved. If once a Person believes, then he has a Right given him by the Promise of GOD to eternal Salvation. The Promise of GOD doth not run thus, *Believe, and if ye persevere in believing then ye shall be saved; but believe and ye shall be saved.* Once lay hold on and accept of *Jesus Christ* for Salvation, and then saved ye shall be.

6. We may safely infer from the Doctrine insisted upon, that *Unbelief is Self-murder*, and that of the worst Sort. It murders the Soul eternally.

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Hence it is that 'tis said to be a rejecting the Counsel of GOD against one's self, *Luke vii. 30.* But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the Counsel of GOD against themselves, that is, to their own Ruin : And so may it be said of every Unbeliever, he rejects the Counsel of GOD to his own Destruction and Ruin. These Things we only mention : And now we shall proceed

To improve this Doctrine for *Trial*. Is it so that 'tis certain, that a convinced Sinner accepting of, or believing on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, shall assuredly be saved ? Then all who would be saved, are nearly concern'd to *try*, whether they do believe or not. And that I may stir you up to this Duty, I shall lay before you some few Considerations. And

1. Consider the Moment and Importance of the Matter. 'Tis a Trial whereon not your worldly Estate, nor any other petty temporal Concern hangs ; but your Life lies upon it, and that even the Life of your Souls. When we bid you try, whether ye believe or not, 'tis as much as if we bade you try whether ye shall be damned or not. Unbelief is the damning Sin by way of Eminency : All other Sins, without this, will not, cannot damn those who live under the Gospel : But this alone will ; for *he that believeth not shall be damned*. Faith on the other Hand will save. God has tack'd Faith and Salvation together ; and it passes the Power of all the Devils in Hell, or Men upon Earth, or Sin in the Heart, to break the Link. Now, is not this a Matter of the greatest Concernment ? Is not this a Question which is worth your while to be satisfied about, whether ye shall be saved, or whether ye shall be damned ?

2. Con-

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2. Consider that ye had need try, whether ye have Faith or not; *for all Men have not Faith, 2 Thess. iii. 2.* Indeed I confess, if all that live under the Gospel had Faith, there were less Occasion for trying it: But since 'tis quite otherwise, since there are some Men, even within the Verge of the Church, who have not Faith, every one of you is concern'd, the Matter being of such Consequence, to try, whether ye be amongst those wicked and unreasonable Men who want it, and so shall be damned, or not. Nay, further,

3. They are but a *very few* among the Swarms of Professors who *have Faith*; and therefore certainly ye are nearly concern'd to try, whether ye may be amongst these few. Our LORD tells us, that few shall be saved, *Luke xiii. 23. Many are called, but few chosen, Matth. xxii. 14.* Therefore there are few Believers; for all Believers are loved and chosen; and none shall believe but they who are *chosen to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of the Truth.* Now is not the great Concernment of every one of you to be putting the Question to your selves, am I among the few who believe and shall be saved, or am I not? If we should tell you, that before ye go from this House, GOD would strike some one of this Assembly dead; every one would be anxious to know if he were the Person: And now when we tell you, that the greater Part of this Assembly have nothing betwixt them and Hell but that brittle Thing *Life*; were not very proper that every one should put the

Question, Am I among the few that believe and shall be saved ; or among the many who believe not, and consequently shall be damned ? See *Isa. liii. 1.*

4. Consider that *many have been deceived in this Matter.* They have thought that they had Faith, and others, 'tis like, have thought so concerning them ; and yet it has been found quite otherwise in the End. The *Laodiceans* thought themselves rich, and increas'd with Goods, and that they stood in need of nothing, *Rev. iii. 18.* while in the mean Time they were poor, wretched, miserable blind and naked. And our LORD tells us, *No every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, Matth. vii. 21.* Think ye that ye do believe ? Well, others have so thought likewise, and have been mistaken ; and may it not be so with you ? and if it may, have ye not Reason to put the Matter to Trial ? Especially considering,

5. That a Deceit or Mistake in this Matter is the worst Consequence imaginable. I might enumerate not a few of the bad, destructive, and ruining Consequences of it : But I shall only name Three. (1.) It makes Men neglect an Opportunity that's never to be recovered again. Opportunity is drawn with a hairy Forefront and bare behind : And sure if in any Thing the Emblem was significant, it is here. Men, while under the Gospel Dispensation of Mercy, have an Opportunity of making Peace with GOD, and securing their eternal Concerns ; but if on

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Time be gone, then there is no more Access for Sinners to treat with GOD about this Matter. Now a mistaken Apprehension, that one does believe, when really he doth not so, makes him slight this golden Opportunity, this choice Season, which can never be retrieved. Many think they believe already, and so put all Exhortations by themselves, as belonging to others, and not to them. (2.) This Mistake exposes them to a *confounding Disappointment*. It buoys them up with Hopes of Heaven and Happiness, fills them with big Expectations of Glory; and then hurls them down headlong into the blackest Despair, into inevitable Misery. (3.) This Mistake brings upon them *eternal and intolerable* as well as *irreparable Misery*. It must of Necessity plunge them headlong into the Pit, whence there is no Redemption. 'Tis not one's apprehending himself to have Faith, but 'tis *Faith it self* that saves; and the Want of it inevitably damns.

6. Consider that 'tis your Interest to put this Matter to a fair Trial, be the Issue what it will. Some of you, 'tis like, may think otherwise; ye may possibly apprehend, that 'tis your Interest to sleep on in that pleasant Dream, that ye have Faith; because if once ye put it to a Trial, and it be found that ye want it, then ye must take up with that melancholy Conclusion, that ye must be damned. To such I only say in a Word, (1.) This Plea were something reasonable if it were possible for you to sleep ever on in this Dream; but this cannot be so. Ye will be oblig'd, even tho' unwilling, to see and know before it be long whether ye have Faith or not. (2.)

Ye might say something for your selves, if it were impossible for these who want Faith ever to come by it ; but this cannot be said. But further, I add, either you indeed have Faith, or ye want it : And which soever of the Two be said, 'tis certainly your Interest to put the Matter to a Trial.

If ye *want Faith*, then 'tis your Interest to know so much: For (1.) One of the greatest Impediments will be taken out of the Way of your believing. Nothing so great a Let to Faith, as a groundless Conceit that one has it already. (2.) Hereby likewise ye will be helped to see the Necessity of Faith : And this (3.) will put upon the diligent Use of the Means : And who can tell but the Issue shall be comfortable, and what is wanting may be made up through the Mercy of GOD. If ye continue under this Deceit, ye are certainly ruin'd : If ye see your Mistake, ye have at least a *Peradventure* for Happiness.

Again, if ye have Faith, 'tis past all doubt your Interest to bring it to Trial : For (1.) Before ye try and find that ye have Faith, ye want the *Comfort* of it. *Safety* indeed results from the *Being* of Faith : For he that believes shall be saved : But *solid Peace and Comfort* results from the *Knowledge* of our own Faith. While we know not that we have Faith, we know not but the Wrath of GOD may be abiding on us ; we know not but we may be on the Way to Destruction ; we know not but the LORD may turn us next Moment into the Pit : And what Comfort, what Peace, can People have in such a Condition ? (2.) While we know not that we have Faith, GOD

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gets not the Honour that's his unquestionable Due from all Believers. As Faith is his Gift, so we are indispensably obliged to be thankful to him for it : But this we cannot be till once we know that we have Faith. Thus GOD is robb'd of the Glory due to his Name : Nay, many Times he is signally dishonoured, by Believers their denying his Goodness to them, and refusing to acknowledge what he has wrought in them and for them. In one Word, 'tis certain, *sooner or later* all must be resolved in this Question, whether they do believe or not, the only Question is, Whether it be our Interest to be resolved *now*, when there is Access to rectify what's found amiss, and to get what upon Search is found wanting ; or *afterwards*, when there is no Place for altering any Thing in your Condition.

7. The *Authority* of GOD should in this Matter prevail with you. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith ; prove your own selves ; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates ?* God commands expressly, nay, *doubles* his Commands to this Duty ; whereby he at once checks our Backwardness to the Duty, and insinuates the Importance and Necessity of it.

8. To add no more, consider that 'tis a strong Evidence of the Want of Faith, to neglect an Inquiry after it. Such as will not *judge themselves*, have Reason to fear that they shall be *condemned of the LORD*. Such as have Faith, will prize it highly ; and such as do prize it, will think it worth their while to enquire, whether they have it or not.

Since then we have made it appear, to be of such near and deep Concernment to you all, to try this Matter; I shall now for this end

1. *Set by* some Sorts of Persons among you, who without all doubt are *Unbelievers*.
2. I shall shew *some false Marks* by which some do deceive themselves.
3. I shall lay down *some Marks* whereby ye may know certainly that ye do believe. Now, of these Things in order.

First we say, we shall *set by* some Persons who are, past all Peradventure, *Unbelievers*. There are *some Men* whose *Sins* go before them into Judgment. Some *Unbelievers* who have their Name writ upon their Forehead. 'Tis needless to talk of applying Marks to them. We need not bid a *Drunkard* or a *Swearer* try themselves whether they believe or not: We may tell them plainly they do not believe, and that therefore they are under the Wrath of GOD. Therefore before we proceed to deal with *close Hypocrites*, whose *Sins* do follow after; we shall set aside some, who without all doubt want Faith, and therefore if they continue in that Estate shall be damned. And,

1. All of you who are *grossly ignorant*, are to be reckoned among this Sort of Persons. How many are there in this House, who are grossly ignorant of GOD, of *Jesus Christ*, and of themselves; who know no more of these Things which do belong to their Peace, than if they had been born in *Turkey*? We are grieved to find such Ignorance among you. Well, O ignorant Sinners, we tell you, in GOD's Name, ye are *Unbelievers*.

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vers. If we should ask you, when we come to deal with you on a sick Bed, or a Death-bed, do ye believe? 'Tis strange to think with what Confidence you would tell, you do believe. But flatter not your own selves; if ye be grossly ignorant, Believers you are not, you cannot be: For (1.) None can believe unless they have a *new Heart* and a *new Spirit* given them; Faith being a Fruit of the Spirit in a renew'd Man, and not a Fruit of the Flesh, or of corrupt unrenew'd Nature. Now, wherever this new Heart is, there is of Necessity *the Knowledge of GOD*; for a new Heart is a *Heart to know GOD*, Jer. xxiv. 7. (2.) None can believe who know not their Need of *Christ*. *The whole need not a Physician but the sick*. Nor will such as do not know their Disease, ever enquire after one that can cure it. What Occasion should Persons who are ignorant of their own Misery find for a Saviour? And how can they prize a Saviour, who know not his Worth? And how can they embrace him, who neither know that he is offered, nor the Terms whereon he is so? Knowledge is so necessary to Faith, that 'tis impossible it should be without it: 'Tis express'd by Knowledge, *Isa v. 3. By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*. 'Tis so much allied to it, that the working Faith in Conversion is express'd by a *Translation out of Darkness into GOD's marvellous Light*. Lay aside then, O ignorant Sinner, all Pretences to Faith. We, in the Name and by the Authority of our great LORD and Master, do discharge such of you as are thus grossly ignorant to make
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any Pretensions to Faith ; for ye have no *Reason* to do so, ye have no *Warrant* ; and therefore ye do it cross to the Mind and Will of GOD. Now if all who belong to this one Sort in this Congregation were set by to a Corner, how great a Multitude of Unbelievers, old and young, would we see ? And O how sad a Sight would it be to see you set by your selves, and all of you carrying upon you the Stamp and Supercription of Satan, ready to be seiz'd by him as his Prisoners, and thrust into the Pit ?

2. All who are *openly profane*, who live in the habitual and customary Practice of open and notorious Sins, are to be numbred amongst this Sort, who, past all peradventure, are Unbelievers. The Scriptures are very plain in asserting this. What is Unbelief, if not to *deny* GOD ? And sure the Scripture reckons such as live thus, Deniers of GOD. 'Tis said of such, that *they profess to know GOD, but in their Works do deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate, Tit. i. 16.* And what can be more express to this Purpose, than what the Apostle *James* discourses at great length, *Chap. ii.* A Set of Men there were in his Day who were profane, but yet had high Preterences to Faith. These the Apostle there smartly reproves, and endeavours to convince them that the Devils may have as good a Claim to Faith as they have. *Thou believest,* says he, *Ver. 19, 20. that there is one GOD, thou dost well ; the Devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead.* And *Ver. 26. For as the Body with-*

out the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also. And a *dead Faith is no Faith at all.* Lay aside therefore, O profane Wretch, your Pretences to Faith, *Will ye lie, steal, swear, and commit Uncleanness,* and yet pretend to Faith? Will not our GOD be avenged of such hellish Impudence as is this? Sure he will. But to be somewhat more particular, we do

(1.) Charge such of you as are *customary Swearers*, to lay aside all Pretences to Faith. Ye are certainly Unbelievers; and, as sure as the eternal GOD lives, shall be damned, if ye continue in this your Impiety. Our Lot is cast in an unhappy Age, wherein Men are grown intolerably bold in *blaspheming the Name of GOD*: Nay, not only so, but not a few *glory in their Shame*, and boast of it that they can outdo others by swearing more and greater Oaths! *Be astonished, O Heavens! Be ye very desolate!* Has any of the Nations served their Gods so? The poor *Americans*, who worship the Devil, will not treat him so ill, as a Set of Men called *Christians*, nay more, reformed Christians, Protestants, do the great GOD of Heaven. O what a Wonder of divine Patience is it, that GOD does not dash down the World about the Ears of such Sinners, that he sends them not alive into Hell! O what Hearts, what trembling Hearts will these Men have, when, ere it be long, they shall find GOD shaking the Earth terribly, when he comes out of his Place to *punish them*? Such Monsters as have torn GOD's Name by hellish Blasphemies, how will they look, when the almighty GOD shall grasp them with his omnipotent Arms, and *tear them in Pieces, and there*

there shall be none to deliver them, none that dare interpose in their behalf? What Hearts will they have, who by their monstrous Oaths have made GOD's Jealousy burn against them, when a little hence his Wrath will flame so high, as to dissolve the Elements with fervent Heat, and pour down the visible Heavens like so much boiling Lead upon the Heads of such GOD-daring Sinners? Would to GOD there were no such Monsters in this Congregation; none such hearing me this Day, who boast of and glory in their Swearing. If there be any such Monsters here, I do, by the Authority of the great GOD, charge such either to repent of this Impiety, or to be gone and leave this Assembly. I know no Place meet for such an one but Hell. But 'tis like some of you may bless your selves in your own Hearts when ye hear such Things, and say, ye do not swear such monstrous and horrid Oaths. Ay, but if ye swear habitually the lesser Oaths, we bid you, in the LORD's Name and Authority, lay aside all Pretences to Faith. Some of you can swear *by your Faith* upon every Turn, and yet pretend to Faith in *Christ*. They who have Faith, will not dare to swear by it. And such as do customarily swear by *Faith*, or by *Conscience*, I dare assert to be Unbelievers: A Believer in *Christ* will not make so light of precious Faith, as to baffle it upon every Occasion; nor will he dare to make that an Idol which is a Grace; the chief Glory whereof is, to abase the Creature, and to exalt GOD. To swear by Faith, or by Conscience, is to put them in GOD's stead; and that is an Indignity which

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which GOD will by no Means bear with, for he has said, he will not give his *Glory to another.* This Sin is become common and customary, that there is but little Hopes of perswading People to leave it, unless GOD by a strong Hand do it. But since we have Occasion to speak of Swearing, I shall only add a few Words to such of you as are guilty. (1.) GOD has taken the Punishment of Swearers into his own Hand. Men commonly let such easily pass; but GOD has said, he will not hold them *guiltless.* (2.) 'Tis a Sin that brings Ruin not only upon particular Persons, but upon Families. *The flying Roll that's twenty Cubits long, and ten Cubits broad, and full of Curses, enters into the House of the Swearer, and destroys it with the Timber and the Stones thereof, and every one that is guilty shall be cut off,* Zech. v. 3, 4. (3.) 'Tis one of the Sins that brings desolating Calamities upon Nations, and makes the Land mourn, *Hos. iv. 2, 3.* (4.) So hateful is this Sin to GOD, that he threatens such as know any to be guilty of it, and conceal the Sin, *Lew. v. 1. And if a Soul sin, and hear the Voice of Swearing, and is a Witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his Iniquity.* 'Tis not enough to forbear swearing, but we must prosecute the guilty.

(2.) *Unclean Persons,* of which there are too many in this Congregation, are all to be reckoned amongst the Unbelievers. The defiled and the Unbelieving are well put together by the Apostle, *Tit. i. 15.* The Works of the Flesh are enumerate, *Gal. v. 19, &c.* and Uncleaness

cleanness leads the Van. Such of you as live in Uncleanness, are past all doubt in the Flesh, yet under the Power of Unbelief; for they that do believe, or are in Christ Jesus, *have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts thereof, Gal. v. 24.*

(3.) *Drunkards*, in vain do ye pretend to Faith; ye are Unbelievers, and shall have your Part eternally with them. If ye look the fore-cited List, ye will find your Names amongst the rest. Ye are not in Christ Jesus; for they who are in Christ Jesus, do not walk after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. Now to this Class of Unbelievers belong (1.) Such as do spend and habitually throw away their Time in Alehouses. Against these there is a Wo denounced, Isa. v. 11, 12. *Wo unto them that rise up early in the Morning that they may follow strong Drink, that continue until Night, till Wine inflame them. And the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts: But they regard not the Work of the LORD, neither consider the Operation of his Hands.* Some, it may be, will not be put by themselves with Drink, yet they spend their Time ordinarily in the Alehouse. Such Persons are to be reckoned amongst these Unbelievers, whose GOD is their Belly, whose Glory is in their Shames, who mind earthly Things. (2.) Such as do abuse themselves so with Drink, that they lose the Use of their Reason. A Sin so abominable, and more than beastly, that 'tis a Wonder how a Man can be guilty of it; it being such an Evil that we cannot find the like of it amongst the Beasts. (3.) Such as go to that
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Height, as to glory in their drinking, against them GOD pronounces a Wo, *Isa. v. 21. Wo unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle strong Drink.* (4.) A Sort of Sinners that seem to outdo all the rest belong to this Class, and that is such as have the Heaven-daring Boldness, to tempt others to drink drunk, not fearing the Curse of GOD that's denounced against such, *Hab. ii. 15. Wo unto him that giveth his Neighbour Drink, that puttest thy Bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayst look upon his Nakedness.* GOD threatens in the following Verse of that Chapter, that the Cup of his right Hand, the Cup of his Fury, shall be turned unto such. He will make them eternally to drink of the Cup of his Wrath, yea, the very Dregs thereof. Whoever they are in this Congregation that belong to this Sort of Men, we charge you to lay aside all Claim to Faith. Unbelievers you are: And if ye do flatter your selves that ye do believe notwithstanding, ye but deceive your selves, and ruine your own Souls.

(4.) *All Liars* are scor'd by as Unbelievers. They are not the Children of GOD, but of the Devil. They have his Name upon their Forehead, and do exactly resemble him who was a Liar from the Beginning. They have no Likeness to the GOD of Truth. Therefore every one that loveth and maketh a Lie shall be excluded from Heaven, *Rev. xxii. 15.* In fine, to this Sort belong Thieves, Murderers, Evil-speakers, Deceivers, Sabbath-breakers, &c. All these are openly profane, and so, past all peradventure, Unbelievers

lievers. We need not endeavour to find them out by secret Search, when these Evidences are to be seen, and observed by every one. But besides the grossly ignorant and openly profane

(3.) The *habitual Neglecters of secret Duties*, particularly of Prayer, are to be set aside from the Number of Believers. Prayer is, if I may so speak, the very Breath of the new Creature; as soon as it is created it prays: So that where there is an habitual Neglect of secret Prayer, there is no Faith. Are there not here some of you, who will rise from your Bed in the Morning, and go to your Work, and never bow a Knee to GOD; and just so leave it at Night again, and have never one Check from your Conscience for all this? If there be any amongst you who do neglect Prayer, we charge you to lay aside all Pretences to Faith in *Christ*.

4. All that *expect to get Heaven by their own Prayers* and other Duties, are to be set aside as Unbelievers. How many of this Congregation are there, who, when interrogate as to their Hopes of Heaven, have nothing else to found their Hopes upon, but their religious Performances? O wretched Ignorance! your own Duties are thus made your Saviour. A certain and sure Proof that ye do not believe.

These and not a few others are unquestionably Unbelievers. Now set aside the grossly Ignorant, the Profane, the Neglecters of secret Prayer, and such as rest upon their Performances for Heaven, we fear the greatest Part of this Assembly might be set aside. Having now
named

named some Sorts of Persons, who, without all Doubt, are Unbelievers, and therefore have no Lot, no Portion in Christ Jesus; and who, if they continue in that State, shall have their Portion assign'd them in utter Darkness with Hypocrites and Unbelievers: We shall proceed

Secondly. To take notice of some false Marks whereby People judge of themselves, and conclude they have Faith, while indeed they have it not.

1. It will not be a sufficient Proof that ye have Faith, that ye *think so*; and confidently say so. This is it that many of you build upon; your own confident Assertion of it; upon no other account; but only that ye think so. When we ask you, Do ye believe? You will readily reply, Yes indeed we believe; and if we further put you to it, as to the Ground of your Assertion; we shall find nothing but the same Thing told us over again with Confidence; We believe, GOD forbid we should not believe. Nay, it may be some will say; *Tho' he say us, we will trust in him.* This we have had told us from Persons who were as far from Faith as the Turks are. We intreat you, in the Fear of the LORD, hazard not your Souls upon a *strong Fauty* that ye have Faith; for we assure you, in the LORD's Name, that this is a false Mark: For (1.) Where there is *least Faith*, there is usually *most Confidence*. Where Faith is, it occasions a holy Jealousy, which others know nothing of: Faith makes such Discoveries of the Deceitfulness of the Heart, as makes the Soul suspect it self. (2.) Our LORD positively

says, *That not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* 'Tis not every one that thinks, and says he believes, that will be own'd as a Believer. Ye think ye believe; ye say ye do so: Well, others have both thought and said so, who yet are in Hell. Our Lord tells us in *Matth. vii. 21, 22.* That many will meet with a fearful Disappointment: He will not own them, nor their Faith, but send them and it together to the Pit, telling them that he *knows them not.* But

2. Some think they believe, because they *have no Doubts*, and *never had any*, about the Truth of the Gospel, their Pardon and Acceptation with GOD through *Jesus Christ.* But take heed to your selves, that ye do not flatter your selves upon this Ground, for it is a false one. Ye say ye never doubted, therefore ye believe. But

(1.) What if we should say that the *contrary follows?* ye never had Doubts, therefore ye do not believe. We might say so on better Grounds: For Want of Doubts may flow (1.) from *Unconcernedness about the Truth of the Gospel.* Persons hear of a thousand Things, and scarce are at Pains to be any ways satisfied, whether they be true or false; because they are not concerned. If we hear that there is a Man in *America* that has a vast Estate, and a huge Revenue, we will never scruple the Truth of it, especially, if they who tell us are but of ordinary Credit: But if we understood, that we could never be maintain'd, unless we got a Share of that Estate, and that the Owner is willing to impart to us what we needed for our Use; we would

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would soon begin to be a little more scrupulous upon the Point, and would not believe the Report so easily, but be apt to entertain a thousand suspicious Thoughts about every Circumstance of the Matter. Just so is it with the most Part of Men and Women in the Matter before us: They do not know their Need of *Christ*; they do not know but they may be able to do their own Business well enough without him; therefore they are not at Pains to enquire narrowly, and to be satisfied as to the Truth of the Gospel Report: They give it Credit, from an easy Credulity, because they do not know their own Concernment in it. But were they once satisfied about their Concernment in it, they would have more Doubts about it: This we see plainly to be the Case of ~~these~~ when GOD awakens their Conscience. While they sleep on in their natural Security, and see not their Need of *Christ*, they can easily believe, as they think, the Truth of what the Gospel reports concerning him: But as soon as they are awakened, and begin to know how much depends upon it, then they find that Doubts do arise. (2.) Want of Doubts may flow from *profound Ignorance of the Mystery of the Gospel*. Ignorant Persons have not their Thoughts exercised about *Christ*, the Excellency of his Person, the Necessity of his Death, and of the Virtue and Efficacy of it, as meritorious of Pardon, and satisfactory to the Justice of GOD; and therefore see no Difficulty in giving a Sort of an Assent, or rather in not questioning the Truth of the Gospel. And then (3.) As to Persons confident

Reliance on Christ, or believing without any Scruple, that they shall be saved by him, this flows from *Ignorance of GOD's Holiness and their own Sinfulness*. They think Sin no great Matter, and therefore think GOD may soon be reconciled to them. From these and such other like Causes may it proceed, that ye want *Doubts*, and that ye are so easily satisfied about this Matter; and from the Consideration of these Causes, it is apparent, That Want of Doubts as to the Truth of the Gospel Report, and Want of Difficulty in the believing of your own Advantage by it, is rather a Sign that ye want Faith, than that ye have it. Further it is plain, That where Persons have just Impressions of their own *Sinfulness*, and of GOD's *Holiness*, of their own *Meanness*, of GOD's *Greatness*, of the *hateful Nature* of Sin, and the stated *Aversion* and *irreconcilable Hatred* GOD bears to it; it will occasion Difficulty in believing the Truth of any Way wherein a Sinner may be admitted to the Enjoyment of GOD; and consequently some Difficulty in hazarding a Reliance upon it; considering that there is naturally much *Darkness* and *Weakness* in the Mind of Man since the Fall. But passing this Consideration we say,

(2.) 'Tis evident, that a great many, who have no Doubts, are yet unquestionably Unbelievers, because they live in gross Ignorance, and in the habitual *Practice of known Sins*. In one Word, ye who think ye have Faith, because ye have no Doubts, are like to deceive your own Souls: For I make no Doubt, there are not a few in Hell roaring out of their intolerable Pain

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Pain, who never doubted but they had Faith, and should be saved, till sad Experience convinced them that they were damned. The Scripture, and the Experience of the People of GOD in all Ages, makes it plain and incontestably evident, that they who do truly believe, find Difficulty in doing so: And who never found any, have never yet seen, that *the carnal Mind is Enmity against GOD, and is not Subject to the Law of GOD, neither indeed can be.* They are the whole Persons that need not, and will never come to the Physician. Where there is any Thing of the carnal Mind remaining, there will be still found Difficulty in believing; Unbelief will still be Faith's Neighbour; and where there is any Thing of God's *marvellous Light* in the Soul, this Unbelief, and Aversion to believing, will in more or less be discerned.

3. Some conclude that they themselves and others have Faith, because they are *moral* and *civil*, and *blameless* in their *external* Conversation. Nothing more common than to call a civil moral Man a *good Man*, and to conclude all is right with him. This is a Mark whereby many judge, and judge amiss of their own Estate, and of the Estate of others; For 'tis one that will not abide the Test of GOD's Word; if we weigh it in the Balance of GOD's Sanctuary, we must write *Tekel* upon it. We grant indeed (1.) That it is very desirable to see Men moral and blameless in their Conversation. 'Tis a Thing praise-worthy, because of its Usefulness among Men: And 'twere to be wish'd that there were more of it in the World; therefore

we shall say nothing to discourage any from a blameless Walk. (2.) We grant that *Immorality* or *Profaneness* is a sure *Mark* of the Want of Faith. But because profane and immoral Wretches do not believe, we must not therefore conclude, that they who are not thus immoral do believe. For notwithstanding of what has been said, we say (1.) That a Man may be blameless, sober and civil as to his external Conversation, who is so far from Faith, that he may be hatching in his Mind the most abominable Evils: Pride may reign there, Ambition, worldly Mindedness, Envy, Discontent and the like. There are Two Sorts of Lusts spoken of by the Apostle, *Ephef. ii. 3.* Among whom also we all had our Conversation in Time past, in the Lusts of our *Flesh*, fulfilling the Desires of the *Flesh* and of the *Mind*, and were by Nature the Children of *Wrath*, even as others. Here the Apostle gives us to understand, that there are Desires or Lusts of the *Mind*, as well as of the *Flesh*; and that the fulfilling the Desires of the *Mind*, or of the *Flesh*, proves a Man a Child of *Wrath*, and so void of Faith. The civil moral Man, it may be, fulfils not the one, but he may be fulfilling the other, and so perish eternally. (2.) So far is a moral civil Walk from Faith, or from being a Sign of Faith, that it has been found in many Heathens who never heard tell of Faith, but perished in heathen Darkness, quite ignorant of *Christ* and the Way of Salvation by him. (3.) So far is it from being a Sign of Faith, that many it has been found to be a sad Hindrance

to Faith ; in as much as they have abused it so far, as to lay Weight upon it, as did the proud Pharisee, *Luke xviii. 11.* The Eyes of thousands are so dazzl'd with their own Blamelessness, that they can see no Need of the Righteousness of *Christ*: And this is destructive eternally to their Souls. Believe it, that a moral, civil and blameless Man in his external Walk, may be an Unbeliever and may be damn'd. A profane Man walks openly and avowedly, as it were, on the Road to the Pit ; and, like *Solomon's* simple Man, says to every one, That he is a Fool : But a civil Man may be going the same Road ; and if a Man have no more, he is surely in the Road to eternal Damnation, as well as the other ; he goes only, if I may so speak, in a *cleaner Path* to the Pit, but will as certainly come thither : O that we could get that fond Conceit banished the World, that there is no more required to make a Man a Christian but Morality. Flatter not your selves ; this is not Faith : I assure you, ye will be made to see so one Day to your Cost.

4. Some have some *Awakenings*, by some common *Touches and Motions of the Spirit of GOD*, and therefore conclude that they believe, and have Faith ; especially if there ensue any Thing like Peace after them. The Occasion of this Mistake is, That when the LORD works the Work of Faith with Power in the Soul, he begins his Work by convincing Men of Sin. But 'tis a very perverse and dangerous Consequence, to conclude from thence, that Faith is where there are Convictions ; for (1.) The worst of

Men may have, and have had Convictions. *Judas, Pilate, Simon Magus* and a great many others, had Bosoms full of Convictions; and yet, past all peradventure, were Unbelievers, and that of the worst Sort. (2.) Ill Men may grow worse by Convictions. Many are so far from being bettered by them, from being brought to *Christ* by them, that they are put further from him, and that several Ways. 1. Some, by their Convictions are driven from *gross Sins* to more secret Sins, from *Profaneness* to *Morality*, and hold there; and their last Case is, in several Respects, worse than their first; as is plain from what has been discoursed above. 2. Some by means of Conviction, have the Sins of their whole Life aggravate more grievously than otherwise they would have been. Sins against Light are the greatest of Sins: And some continue all their Life long under a continual Vicissitude of Sin and Conviction; they hold on in Sin, tho' they have from Time to Time dreadful Throws of Conviction. Some Persons we have known this way exercised all their Life, yea, Persons of great Knowledge, who have been far from being beat from their Sin by Convictions, that they have only served to aggravate and enhance their Guilt. (3.) Some others are so far from being led to *Christ* by their Convictions, that they make a *Christ* of their Convictions, and conclude all is well with them because they are convinced, and so seek no further. They think *GOD* loves them, because his Spirit deals with them; little minding, that *GOD's* Spirit strove many a Year with the old World.

World, and then destroyed them at last. 4. Others there are, who by despising and quenching Convictions, pave the Way for themselves to open Profaneness, and a boundless Liberty in sinning: For by hardning themselves under Convictions, they provoke GOD to give them up to the Ways of their own Hearts, because when they know GOD they do not worship him as GOD, therefore he gives them up to vile Affections, Rom. i. 21, &c. This was the unhappy Case of many in the heathen World; and I may say is the Case of many in the Christian World. Likewise 5. Convictions many Times terminate in dreadful Despair; and so hurry Men headlong to Hell, instead of bringing them into the Way to Heaven, driving them to the Devil, when they should come to Christ. Thus it fared with Judas and some others.

In fine, we intreat you do not flatter yourselves; Convictions are no good Sign of Faith. I know some are so ignorant of GOD, and of this Work of the Spirit of GOD, that they are apt to mock and deride such as the LORD brings to a Conviction of Sin, as mad, or at least melancholy. To such I say, if ye never knew Conviction for Sin, ye never knew Conversion; and unless ye be convinced of Sin, and awakned, ye will never believe, and so shall never be saved: And to laugh at Conviction, is a sure Sign of one that never had Faith. But, on the other Hand, let none rest upon Convictions, either as Conversion, or as a Sign of Faith: For there are abundance of Convictions in Hell, where there is not one Grain Weight of Faith, nor to Eternity.

nity shall be. Every Bosom there is full of Convictions, and yet all are Unbelievers; and as many of them as liv'd under the Gospel, are damned for Unbelief.

5. Some have *Knowledge of the Things of GOD*, and therefore conclude that they do believe: They understand the Letter of the Gospel, and have been instructed by Reading, Converse, and the Painfulness of Masters and Ministers; therefore they bless themselves in their own Hearts, when the Judgments of GOD are denounced against Unbelievers; and when they are bid believe, they put the Exhortation by them, thinking that they believe already, and that all is well with them. This is a dangerous Mistake, and ruins many poor Souls. We do indeed grant, that there is no Faith without Knowledge, and therefore have already laid aside the Ignorant as Unbelievers: But we are far from allowing that Knowledge is a sure Sign of Faith; for (1.) A great deal more of the Knowledge of the Gospel than even many true Believers have, may be attained without any special Aid or Assistance of the Spirit of GOD; but Faith is not to be obtained without the special Operation of the Spirit. Hence 'tis called, *the Faith of the Operation of GOD*, and *the Work of Faith*, that's wrought by *the exceeding Greatness of GOD's Power*, Col. ii. 12. 2 Thess. i. 11. Eph. i. 19. (2.) One may have much Knowledge, and yet live in open Profaneness, and the continued Practice of known Sins; which is utterly inconsistent with the least Spark of saving Grace. (3.) An Unbeliever may have such

such a Measure of the Knowledge of *Christ*, and of the Way of Salvation by him, as to be able to instruct others in the Knowledge of him: *Judas* had this, and yet wanted Faith. Nay (4.) One may not only be capable of teaching others, but may even excel others, and be eminent for such Gifts as are of Use for the Edification of the Church, and yet be void of saving Faith; no doubt *Judas* was beyond many others: Being a Disciple of the highest Form, he had Gifts in a suitable Measure, but no Grace. But what need I say more upon this Head? the Devil, no doubt, has more Knowledge of, and Insight into the Mystery of the Gospel, as to the Letter, than perhaps any Man on Earth; and yet has a Heart full of Malice, Spite, and irreconcilable Enmity to it. Men, after the same Manner, may have their Head full of Notions of Truth, and be perfectly void of saving Grace; like the Toad, which has a precious Stone in its Head, and yet has its Body full of Poison.

6. Every Sort of *Concern about Salvation* is not a sufficient Evidence of Faith. Some have some Concern, and are some way thoughtful about Salvation, and about Freedom from Wrath, and yet are Strangers to, and never come the Length of the *precious Faith of GOD's Elect*. O what a Length went the young Man in the Gospel, in his Concern about Salvation! we may see the History, *Matth. xix. 6, &c.* and *Mark x. 17.* Now I shall take Notice of several Evidences of some Concern about Salvation in his Conduct, to let you see that all Concern about Salvation will not prove you real Believers. (1.) He was sensible

sible that it was not any *Enjoyment of a present Life* that could make him happy. Tho' he was a young Man, as *Mark* tells us, a young Man that had the Advantage of a fair Estate, and a Ruler, as *Luke* tells us; yet he had something more in View than a present temporal Life: It was eternal Life he would have. (2.) Such was his Sense of the Worth of eternal Life, and of his Need of it, notwithstanding his Youth, Health, Honour and Wealth, that he had *strong Desires* after eternal Life. This the whole Series of the History makes evident. (3.) His Desires were not mere sluggish Wishes: They put him upon a *Concern about the Means* whereby this Life was to be obtain'd. This was the Question he came to our LORD about; *Good Master*, says he, *what good Thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal Life?* (4.) As far as he knew he had practised. The poor Man knew no more but the Commands, and that they ought to be kept; and those he had kept, and that *universally*, without any Exception of any of them, and that with *Diligence and Continuance*: (*All*) *these have I (kept) and that from my (Youth.)* There is *Universality, Diligence and Continuance*. (5.) He had a *Sense of his own Ignorance*: He was jealous of the Shortness of his Knowledge, and that he yet lack'd something. (6.) This Sense did lead him to *seek after*, and *desire Instruction*; and he came to the right Hand, *Christ*. (7.) When he came, every Thing in his Carriage discovered his great Concern: *First*, he comes *running*, he was afraid of being in a Mistake, he was *desirous* to be inform'd; and these Two together made him *run*.
Secondly,

Secondly. He took all feasible Methods to obtain his Desire at *Christ's* Hand ; he gave him an Epithet importing much Respect to him, as able and willing. *Good Master,* says he. (*Master*) points at his *Ability*, and (*Good*) at his *Willingness* : And moreover, *Mark* tells us, that he kneel'd to him. (8.) Such was his Concern for Salvation, that he resolved to *scruple nothing* that was enjoyn'd him. He knew of no Reserve in his own Heart. The Words say plainly, to any one that considers the Import of them, that the Man had a Resolution to do any Thing that was enjoyn'd him. He knew not that there was any Thing he would not do : *What shall I do?* says he. He was resolved to decline nothing that he could be bid do, in order to obtain eternal Life. Now thus far did he go in a Concern for Salvation, and yet he fell short of it ; as far as his Concern brought him, it led him not to Faith ; he fell short of that. Now, ye who think that ye believe, because ye have *some Concern* about your Souls and eternal Life, do ye come this Man's Length ? I fear few of you can say, ye do : And yet ye must and will advance further, if ye have Faith, and be saved ; for this Man and *Christ* parted, and we never hear of their meeting again.

7. Some Joy in hearing the Word, some Affection to, and Delight in the Gospel Report concerning *Christ*, are not a sufficient Mark of Faith. Many People, especially of the younger Sort, are ready to mistake this for Faith, or a sure Sign of Faith ; therefore, to undeceive them, we shall shew, 1. Whence it is that People take it for Faith, or an Evidence of it at least. 2. Whence

Whence this may arise that may occasion these *Flashes* of *Tenderness*, where there is no Faith.

3. That it is indeed no Sign of Faith.

As to the (*First*) 'Tis no great Wonder it should be *mistaken* for *Faith*, or an *Evidence* of it, if we consider, *First*, the State of the Person in whom Faith is wrought, and the State of the Soul in which such *Flashes* of Affection and *Tenderness* are ordinarily wrought. When the LORD works *Faith*, he works *Conviction* to clear the Way; so, usually these *Flashes* follow some *Convictions* and Awakenings. *Secondly*. As Faith is wrought and comes by hearing of the Word, and by the Spirit of GOD's concurring with his Power; so these *Flashes* are occasion'd by the Word, and by the Operation of the Spirit, tho' but a common Operation, giving some superficial Taste and Relish of the Sweetness of heavenly Things. *Thirdly*. As Faith, when wrought in the Soul, *glues* it, as it were, to the *Ordinances*; so the usual Effect of these Tastes is, a great and *strong Desire* after the *Ordinances*, which makes them multiply Duties, and delight in approaching to God. *Finally*. As Faith makes the Soul *seek beyond* the bare Performance of Duties, for *Communion* with *Christ* in the *Ordinances*; so Persons who have such *Flashes*, may find an *Unsatisfiedness* with the *Ordinances*, when they find not that same Relish as formerly. Any one that considers duly these Things, will think it no Wonder to find that there are *Mistakes* in this Matter.

(*Secondly*) We shall a little enquire into the *Rise of these Flashes* of Concern, Delight and *Tenderness*,

derness, which look so like to that Joy which Believers find upon their Believing. And if we observe, we shall find some *one* or *other* of the following Particulars, or at least a *Concurrence* of more of them to have an Influence upon those Persons, to the Production of these Effects. (1.) *Novelty.*

The Things of the Gospel are new many Times to People ; and new Things, especially when of such a Nature that they threaten us no Hurt, but on the contrary eminently promote our Advantage, will very readily work upon our Affections, and give some Delight, which longer Custom and Acquaintance doth abate. (2.)

There may be something in a Person's *Circumstances*, which falling in with the Proposal of the *Sweet* of the Gospel, may readily occasion those Flashes of Tenderness we are now discoursing of: As for Instance, a Person under Distress of Mind, will desire Freedom from it ; and if, upon such an Occasion, the Mind be entertain'd with the Joys of Heaven, the Love, Mercy and Grace of GOD in *Christ* to Sinners ; if the Mind hereby find a Diversion from its Trouble, this may occasion great Delight. The like Instance we may have, when Persons fall out with the World upon some signal Disappointment.

(3.) This may be considerably augmented, by the Strength of the Passions in Youth. (4.) A Variety of Gifts in Preachers may occasion this. (5.) Something taking and peculiar in some Mens Way of preaching occasions this. Some have Fluency of Language, Plenty of Matter, Warmness of Affection ; when these meet together, such Affections will readily be moved. (6.)

A Surprize may have a great Influence this way. These we may possibly afterwards have Occasion to discourse more fully of; now we but name them, and proceed

(Thirdly) To shew that these are no *sure Signs of Faith*: And for clearing this, we say, (1.) We have let you see how such Affections may be excited, without any *special Operation* of the Spirit of GOD; which Faith can never be. (2.) The Scripture gives us an Account of such Persons who had the Flashes we speak of. Our Lord, speaking to the Jews of *John Baptist*, says, *John v. 35. He was a burning and a shining Light, and ye were willing to rejoyce in his Light for a Season.* And these Hearers of the Word that are resembled to the stony Ground, *received the Word with Joy*, and yet prov'd naught in a Day of Trial. (3.) Our own Observation may furnish us with Instances, more than enow, of Persons who have had great Flashes of Joy, which have terminate in nothing, or worse than nothing. But, leaving this; we say

8. The *Multiplication of religious Duties* is no sufficient Mark of Faith. Some do apprehend, if they be punctual in their Attendance upon the Duties of Religion, that this is Proof enough that they do believe. But how far this is from Truth, is easy enough to be discerned, by any that duly considers what great Proficiency some have made this way, who yet have remain'd utterly unacquaint with GOD, and Strangers to the Faith of GOD's Elect. If ye have no other Proof of your Faith than this, that ye are punctual in your Attendance upon the Du-

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ties of Religion, what do, or have ye more than they with whom the Prophet *Isaiah* had to do? A People they were who did abound in all these Performances, and yet were naught. Look at them in that Representation the Prophet gives of them, *Isa. lvi. 2.* We shall find they had more to say upon this Score, than I believe most of you can pretend unto. *They seek me daily, says GOD, and delight to know my Ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their GOD: They ask of me the Ordinance of Justice; they take Delight in approaching to GOD.* One would think here are surely a Set of excellent Persons, Believers no doubt: But all this notwithstanding, God rejects all their Duties, and themselves also, with the greatest Detestation and Abhorrence, as we find the Prophet telling them, both in this, and in the *first Chapter* of his Prophecies. We may here observe, that they went a great Way in the Performance of Duty: For (1.) We find that they seek GOD. They do not live, as many others did, in a careless Neglect of him, whereby there is an incontestable Evidence given of an utter and entire Want of Faith. (2.) They seek him in the *Ordinances of his own Appointment*; as this Prophet hints here, and gives a more full Account in the *first Chapter* of his Prophecy. They did not invent to themselves new and uncouth Ways of serving and seeking GOD, such as their own extravagant Fancies might suggest to them; but they adhered to the Ordinances of their GOD, his Appointments. (3.) Their Attendance was not a Piece of Force and Violence put upon them: They

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They took Delight in Duty, and in approaching to GOD. (4.) They were frequent and close in their Applications to Duty ; they sought GOD (*daily*). (5.) They are desirous of further Information as to their Duty ; they did ask of GOD the Ordinance of Justice. (6.) They did not only go on in the Performance of the ordinary Duties of Religion, but they did likewise multiply the more extraordinary ; such as the Fasting spoken of in the ensuing Verses. Thus far did they go : But notwithstanding all this, they were void of Faith. Thus far may ye go, and yet be utter Strangers to the Faith of GOD's Elect. Indeed, such as are habitual Neglecters of Duties, cannot reasonably pretend to any Interest or Concern in this Faith of GOD's Elect : Yet neither can such as multiply them, say on this account, that they have Faith ; since 'tis plain, in the Instance just now mentioned, that this may be to a high Degree while Faith is wanting. And no doubt Paul before his Conversion was short of none in Performances of this sort. Nay, further we add,

9. Every Change upon the Man, even to the better, is no sure Proof of Faith. For great Alterations, as to People's Sentiments, or to their Inclination and Conversation, may be wrought where there is no gracious Change upon the Heart, but it continues as before. Some, when they find themselves altered to the better from what once they were, do presently begin to think, that now they have Faith, and that all shall be well with them. But there is a vast Mistake here, a most dangerous, ruining and Soul-destroying Error. Indeed, we must own

that where there is no Change, there can be no Faith ; for Faith is the Gift of GOD, the Work of the Spirit of *Christ*, and is not born with Men, but wrought in them ; and when it comes, it comes not alone ; 'tis one of the most essential Parts of the new Man, or new Creature. That where we may undeceive any of you, who lay Weight upon that which may fail you, if trusted to, we shall insist a little in shewing you, what *Changes* there may be on a Man, who yet continues a *Stranger* to the precious Faith of GOD's Elect. How these Changes are to be distinguished from the other, which Persons really regenerate do undergo, we may afterwards have Occasion to discourse, when we come to give the Marks of Faith that will abide the Trial. We say then, that some Change wrought upon you to the better, is not Proof enough that ye have Faith ; since there may be a great Change wrought upon Persons who never did believe ; and that upon the whole Man : For

(1.) There may be a great Change wrought upon the *Mind* or *Understanding* of a Man. Man is naturally blind, and knows not his Way. Sin has put out the Eye of the Soul, and hence Men are said to be in *Darkness*, or to be *Darkness* itself in the Abstract, before the LORD begin to deal with them : And when the LORD begins to work upon them, then he enlightens their Minds, translating them from *Darkness* to his Light. But one who never was savingly illuminate, nor, may be, ever shall, may yet undergo a great Change in his Understanding. I tell you a three-

fold Change upon the Mind that one may undergo who never was savingly enlightned. (1.) Such an one may, by mere Diligence and Application, without any supernatural Assistance attain a *great deal of Knowledge*, of the Truths of GOD, and of the Things of Religion, that he had not before. There are few, if any of you, so very dull, but could attain a great Measure of Knowledge, would ye apply your selves to Reading, Study and Meditation; ye might get your Minds fraught with much *Head Knowledge* of Religion: And some by this Means do attain a great Measure of Knowledge, which makes a great Change upon their Minds; the Mind that formerly was full of the Blackness of Darkness and gross Ignorance, is now furnished with a Stock of Knowledge. But all this may be without any Faith, or without any supernatural Work of GOD upon the Soul; yea, it may be in one utterly void of any Regard to GOD. (2.) There may further be a Change to something yet higher; the Mind may have a *Beam or Ray of supernatural Light* darted into it, whereby it may not only understand these Truths as it doth other Truths, but may further come to see some peculiar Beauty and Usefulness in them. That one that's void of the saving Faith of GOD's Elect may reach this Illumination, the *Apostle* asserts plainly, while he makes it one of the Attainments of them who may fall irrecoverably away, *Heb. vi. 4.* Nay (3.) This Light may be increas'd to such a Degree, as to put them in a Capacity to *unfold* the Truths

Truths

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Truths of the Gospel to others. Thus there may be a great Change wrought upon the Mind or Understanding, a Change from gross Ignorance to some *acquired Knowledge*; from this *acquired Knowledge* to some Degree of *Spiritual Illumination*, and from that to a *high Degree of Spiritual Light*, such as *Judas* and *Balaam* had, whereby they were capacitate to know and understand the Things of GOD in a Degree so eminent, as to be able to instruct others. All this Change may one that is an Unbeliever undergo, and yet continue so still, and perish eternally in Unbelief.

(2.) There may be a great Change upon the *Conscience*, and yet the Soul may be void of Faith. There may be a Change from *deep Security* to *Awakenings and Convictions*; and from such *Troubles* again to a Sort of *Peace*, Calmness and Serenity of *Conscience*. Thus many Times it is with temporary Believers. If the *Thundrings* of the Law make Sinners begin to shake and bestir themselves; then the *Joys of Heaven* presented to the Soul's View, in the Light of a Beam of supernatural common Illumination, will immediately calm, compose and settle all again.

(3.) There may be a great Change wrought on the *Affections*, where there is no Faith. One may have *Flashes of Joy and Grief* about spiritual Objects. Nay, more, there may be something like an abiding Change wrought on the *Affections*; the *Delight* in spiritual Duties, the *Sorrow* for Sin, *Fear* of Wrath, that's attain'd, may be kept up in the Soul for a long Time.

But of this we have spoken sufficiently already : Wherefore we proceed to a

(4.) Change, that may be where there is no Faith, and that is upon the *Will*. See what a *Will* the *Israelites* had; *Deut. v. 27*. The *Will* may be wrought so far upon, as to arrive at many *faint Inclinations*, *Wishings* and *Wouldings* after Grace. The Man that's awakened in some Measure, hears so much of the Excellency of Grace, and of the Beauty of Holiness, which he is convinced in his Judgment is true, that it may induce and draw the *Will* to some *Wishes*, and even to some *Resolutions* of seeking after it. In fine, there may be

(5.) Great Changes upon the *Conversations* where there is no Faith. The openly *profane* Man may be changed into a *civil*, moral and blameless Man; the *civil* Man, by some common Work of GOD's Spirit, may be turn'd into a *Professor*, who may multiply religious Duties, and pretend as high as any. Where Persons live under a faithful Ministry, and under the Influence of lively Ordinances, they may find it almost impossible, through the Power of Conviction, to continue in open Profaneness, or, it may be, to rest upon *mere Civility*. These Minds may be so fill'd with Light, that Conscience will not suffer them to rest short at least of a *Form of Godliness*: And therefore many upon such Occasions go this length, and step no further. As some do *escape the Pollutions of the World through Lust*, who yet are again entangled therein, and overcome, *2 Pet. ii. 2*. So some who have been entangled for a considerable Time, are afterward pull'd as

it were out of the Snare again, and reach a blameless Walk before the World; and, it may be, make a fair Profession of Religion, and yet are unacquainted with Faith. *Paul*, before his Conversion, was blameless concerning the *Righteousness that is of the Law*: And why may not one, who has for a while been profane, reform, and go as great a length that way as *Paul* did? There is no doubt he may.

10. In the *last* Place, we say, that ye may have *some sort of Faith*, and yet want the *saving Faith* of GOD's Elect. Every one that believes has not that Faith which we have been discoursing of. There are *three* Sorts of Faith which ye may have, and yet be eternally ruined, getting your Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers.

(1.) There is a Sort of Faith that we may call a *Cradle Faith*. 'Tis of an Age, if I may so speak, with the Person that has it. Some of you, tho' ye say ye believe, yet cannot tell how ye came to believe; only as long as ye can mind any Thing, ye remember ye still did so; from the Time ye could distinguish betwixt Good and Evil, ye did always believe; ye brought it from the Cradle with you. This is the common Faith that most Part have, and they go no further. And if we could but once get Men and Women perswaded that this Faith will not save them, we would, we think, had gained much upon them. Believe it, my Friends, this Faith never saved one, and to Eternity will never save any; but many one has it ruined. I have a fourfold Exception to lay against this Faith. (1.) 'Tis

a Plant not of GOD's planting. The Faith of GOD's Elect is a Plant that's planted by the Hand of GOD; hence it is called, *the Faith of the Operation of GOD*, and *the Gift of GOD*: But this Faith that's so rise among you, is a Weed that grows up of its own accord, without any Sort of Pains. They who have it are not Debtors to GOD for it, since it sprung up with them, and GOD had no Hand in its Production. (2.) It is in a *bad Soil* that it grows, in a corrupt unrenewed Nature. Ye who say ye do believe, dare ye say, as in the Sight of GOD, that ever your Hearts were changed and renewed? I am sure many of you dare not say it; or if ye do, Conscience will tell you to your Face, that you lie: Yet notwithstanding this, you will maintain that ye believe, and so think your selves sure of Salvation. I beseech you, by all the Love ye bear to your own Souls, do not hazard them upon this Faith; for as sure as GOD lives, it will deceive you. There never grew a Tree in Nature's Garden, in a Soil so bad as that of unrenewed Nature, that ever was capable of bearing so choice a Fruit as Salvation is. All that grows there is Sin, and the Fruit of that is Death. *The Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. iii. 23. and if ye expect any other, ye will meet with a Disappointment that will not be easy to be born. (3.) This Faith of yours is *not kept alive by Influences from Heaven*, as is the Faith of GOD's Elect. As the precious Faith of GOD's Elect is at first planted in the Soul, by the blessed Hand of him, who is the Author of Faith to all them that believe;

so it receives all its *Increases* from him. He nourishes it by Influences from above: It derives all its Growth from him. The gentle Breezes of the *Spirit, the North and South Winds* breathing in the Ordinances, quicken all the Graces of the Spirit, and cause them send forth a savoury and fragrant Smell. Faith holds its Life, its All of *Christ*. But this Faith of yours quite overlooks the Mediator; it sees no Need of him; it leads not to him. That which it lays hold upon, is some wrong Notion of GOD, as if he were altogether such an one as your selves, a God that has as light Thoughts of Sin as ye have, and can with as much Ease pass it by without any Resentment, as ye can commit it. GOD doth indeed take Pleasure in them that hope in his Mercy; but 'tis in his Mercy as discovered in the Gospel-method of Salvation; and any Faith that has no Respect to this, will be rejected of GOD. The Faith of GOD's Elect fetches every Thing from *Christ* as the Way and the Treasure; and it comes all to him as the End. This Faith of yours, when ye have need of Pardon, carries you straightway to GOD's Mercy, without ever owning *Christ*: But the Faith of GOD's Elect, leads the Believer to *Christ*, as to him whom Mercy has exalted, to be the Prince and the Saviour, to give *Repentance and Remission of Sins*. Thus Faith, saving Faith, comes to *Christ* for all, while that common Faith that ye rest upon, quite neglects him.

(4.) As is the Tree, so is the Fruit. This Faith of yours, as 'tis not of GOD's Planting, but a Weed sprung out of corrupt Nature's Soil, and

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is kept alive by Ignorance of GOD's Holiness and Justice, and the exceeding Sinfulness of Sin : So its Fruit is answerable to the Root: We see not the *Fruits of Holiness* grow upon it ; but, on the contrary, Formality, a Neglect of GOD, Indifferency about Salvation, and all the Concerns of Religion. And whether ye will believe it or not, when these Fruits continue a while, they will ripen into Damnation. This Faith will not save you, and therefore trust not to it.

(2.) Ye may have a Faith which I may call a *rational Faith*, for Destruction's sake. This is a Step beyond the former. That common Faith is merely the Fruit of Custom and Education ; but this goes a Degree farther. Some Men of refined Spirits are not accustomed to take Truth upon Trust from others, but to search into it themselves, that they may give their Assent to it upon solid and rational Grounds. And such Persons are apt to think it irrational to a high Degree, to use less Caution in enquiring into the Grounds whereon they do believe that Religion they are to hazard their Souls upon ; And certainly thus far are they in the right. Well then, that they may be satisfied in this Matter, they enquire what Reason they have to believe that these Persons did indeed write the Scripture, who are given out to be the Penmen of it ; and whether, if they be found to be the Penmen of it, they be Persons worthy to be credited. Upon Search they find both to be confirmed, by the greatest historical Evidence possible : And thus they

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they are brought to give a general Assent, and take up a firm Perswasion of the Truth of the Scripture in general, and particularly of the Truths concerning *Jesus Christ*; and here they rest, and take this for saving Faith. And this Sort of Faith is common enough among the more learned Sort, as the other is among the more ignorant. Many a learned Man has gone to Hell with this Faith, which is sufficient indeed to put an Accent upon their Misery, and to vindicate the Justice of GOD in their eternal Destruction; but is no way useful to them for Salvation. The Nature, Uses and Defects of this Faith, I shall not insist on; because few of you are much concerned in it, it being not ordinarily to be found among any, save those who have more Leisure and Occasion for Reading than most of you have.

(3.) Ye may yet go a Step further, and reach that Faith, which by practical Divines is called a *temporary Faith*; such as was that which the Hearers compared to the stony Ground had, of whom our Lord speaks in *the Parable of the Sower*, Matth. xiii. 20. And this steps further than that Faith which we last mentioned, in *two Things, First*. In its *Rise*. The former Sort of Faith is the Fruit, merely of the Exercise of the rational Faculties; but this is produced by an Operation of the Spirit of GOD. The Power of the Spirit going along with the Dispensation of the Word, doth by a common Operation produce this Effect in the Soul. *Secondly*. The former Faith has a Respect *principally*, if not only, to the Truth of the Gospel; whereas

whereas this has likewise a Respect to the Beauty, Sweetness, and Goodness of the Things themselves; and hence we are told that they *received the Word with Joy*. They saw a Beauty, Sweetness and Usefulness in the Things discovered, as well as Truth in the Discovery; and both, by a Beam of supernatural Light, let in upon the Soul by a common Operation of the Spirit of GOD. But however this Faith goes thus far; yet in *two* Things it falls short of the Faith of GOD's Elect. *First*. It has no *abiding Root*; 'tis only a transient Work upon the Soul, without the Communication of any inward and abiding Principle; the Heart is not chang'd; only there is a transient Effect wrought upon the rational Powers of the Soul. *Secondly*. It never carries the Soul the length of a *full Closure* with the Gospel-method of Salvation, whatever Apprehension of the Excellency thereof may be in it; yet there is never such a View got of all the Parts of that Contrivance, as is sufficient to determine the Heart to an Approbation of it.

Several other Sorts of Faith might likewise be named, which Persons may have, and yet fall short of that which is saving: But I shall pass them, because there is not so great Danger that they be mistaken, and put in the Room of the Faith we now enquire after.

Thus far have we gone in a Discovery of the sandy Foundations whereon many of you do build your Hopes of Heaven, and we fear that yet many of you will hold on in the old Course, holding fast Deceit, and building

building upon the Sand. If ye do so, then we assure you, in the Name of GOD, the Foundation will fail you; and the higher your Expectations are raised, the more confounding will your Disappointment be. Since the Hazard has been laid before you, GOD is free; we are free of your Blood; and therefore your Destruction is intirely of your selves; and this will be no mean Aggravation of your Misery.

We shall now proceed to lay before you

Thirdly. The true Marks of the Faith of GOD's Elect, whereby we may know and be sure that ye do believe, and that believing ye shall be saved; which was the last Thing we proposed in our Entry upon this Use of the *Doctrine*.

But before we come to the Marks themselves, we shall lay before you a few Things. And

1. We take it for granted, that there are Marks whereby Faith may be known. A very considerable Part of the Scripture is said to be written on this very Design, to assist Persons in making a Judgment of their own State, whether they do believe or not, 1 *John* v. 13. *These Things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of GOD, that ye may (know) that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of GOD.*

2. That we may make so clear a Judgment of our Case by these Marks, as to reach Joy in Faith's Apprehension of our own Interest in *Christ* and Salvation, there is requisite a *special Influence* of the Spirit of GOD. Comfort GOD keeps in his own Hand, and he is most sovereign and absolute in the dispensing of it. Yet

3. We

3. We say there are such Marks as may, through an ordinary Influence of the Spirit, keep the Soul up in such a *comfortable Perswasion* of its believing, of the Reality of its Faith, as will at least keep from disquieting and *sinking Discouragements*, and engage it to a cheerful Attendance to all commanded Duties, as not being despondent of a blessed Issue of what concerns it.

4. There are some Marks which have a Respect to the *Reality*, and others which do respect the *Degree* of Faith. We design only to insist upon such as have a Respect to the Reality of it; and shall not spend Time in offering Marks, whereby we may know where Faith is in its highest Degree: For when it comes to that, it will evidence it self to the Soul by these blessed Concomitants of it, *Peace of Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. Our Business now leading the other Way, we shall enquire into these Evidences of Faith which are to be found for *ordinary* in all them that do really believe, that is, when not under the immediate Influence of some Temptation. There are moreover some Marks that are steadable upon all Occasions, in a Storm, as well as in fair Weather: They are of Use to the Soul in all its greatest Straits and Perplexities: There are others which are not discernible in Storms; we shall only insist upon the former, and shall not spend your Time in handling many, because one solid Mark may be of more real and solid Use than many.

The Way being thus far cleared, I shall now proceed to lay before you some of these Evidences

dences of Faith, these Marks whereby ye may safely conclude that ye do believe. And

I. We say one may know and be sure that he doth believe, and that even in the Midst of all Temptations that may befall him by his *Hearts choosing, embracing and approving GOD's Way of saving Sinners by the Mediation of Jesus Christ*, and relying thereon with a *Renunciation* of all other pretended Ways. This Mark indeed is not distinct from Faith; for it is one of the principal Actings of saving Faith, yet 'tis such an one as is discernible by all that will reflect upon themselves, and that even under great Storms and violent Temptations. Now that ye may understand this Mark distinctly, we shall,

1. give you some short *Account of the Gospel Contrivance for the Salvation of Sinners.*
2. We shall shew wherein it is that this *Approbation of the Gospel-method of Salvation consists.*
3. We shall shew, how Faith doth approve of it. And lastly. How it doth discover, even under the greatest Temptations, that it indeed doth approve of this Method, to an utter Rejection of all others.

(1.) As for the *Gospel Contrivance* which Faith approves of, ye may take some *Account* of it in the following Remarks.

1. It leans upon a Twofold Supposition in reference to Man's Estate. The one is that which we find our LORD asserting of the Church of *Laodicea*, Rev. iii. 17. And 'tis equally true of all naturally. All Men, by Nature, are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Poor, straying apostate Man has his Eyes put out, and knows not how to take one Step towards
Happi-

Happiness : He is as blind as a Stone. Nor has he any Thing to skreen himself from the Wrath of a Sin-revenging GOD : Sin has made him naked : He has now no Garment to clothe him, to keep the Shame of his Nakedness from being seen. He is a perfect Bankrupt, and cannot go to the Charge of one good Thought. Ransack his Heart, look never so narrowly into it, ye shall not there find so much Goodness left by Sin, as to furnish out one really good and acceptable Thought. Upon all these Accounts, he is miserable, and wretched, with a Witness. Again, this Contrivance lays down as a Foundation, this grand Supposition, that Man can do nothing for the Supply of his own Wants.

2. The Gospel is a *Discovery* of a blessed *Contrivance* that GOD has laid down for the Salvation of Sinners, for providing them a blessed Supply of all these Defects. There was from Eternity a happy Contrivance fram'd, for providing sinful Man with a *Garment*, a Robe of Righteousness, that the Shame of his Nakedness may not appear ; and for preparing *Eye-salve* to him, to cure his natural Folly and Blindness ; and *Riches* to him, that he may have a sufficient Stock to live upon in Time and for Eternity, even Riches of Grace, and Riches of Glory, the *unsearchable Riches* of Christ.

For 3. This blessed Project provides all this Supply for poor sinful Man, in Jesus Christ the Mediator of the Covenant. *All the Treasures of Wisdom and of Knowledge are hid in him ; for it pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell,* Col. i. 19. and ii. 3. And that upon this blessed Design,

Design, that all his People might come to him as the great *Repository* of Wisdom, and thence derive such Supplies as they find Occasion for. He is able to furnish them with Riches of Grace here, and Riches of Glory hereafter; for with him are *durable Riches and Righteousness*, Prov. viii. 18. And hence it is that we find him pressing the *Laodicean Church* to come to him that she might have *Gold tried in the Fire, that she might be rich; and white Raiment, that she might be clothed; that the Shame of her Nakedness might not appear; and Eye-salve that she might see*, Rev. iii. 18.

4. There is in this Contrivance, a Way laid down, for putting the Persons whom GOD designs to save, in the *actual Possession* of that blessed Provision that's made for them in a Mediator; and such a Way as is exactly adapted to the wise and holy Ends GOD proposes to himself in the whole Project.

5. The great Design that GOD aims at, both in making this *Provision* for the Supply of the Wants of elect Sinners, and in putting them in the *Possession* of it, is, on the one Hand, to *advance glorious Grace*; and, on the other, to *lay Man low*. This is expressly asserted to be the Design of GOD in carrying on this Project and Contrivance, 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. Christ Jesus is made of GOD to us *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*; that no *Flesh might glory in his Sight, but that he that glorieth may glory in the LORD*. Man has Wisdom; but there is no Access for him to glory in it, since GOD has provided and treasured it up for him in *Christ Jesus*; and not only so, but actually put him in Posses-

sion of it ; for *he is made of GOD Wisdom to him.* Man, by this means, is clothed in a stately Robe of Righteousness ; but he has nothing to glory of, since, I may say, GOD not only prepares the Robe, but *puts it on.* *Christ Jesus* being made of *GOD Righteousness to Man*, he is made holy, and so made meet to be a Sharer of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light ; but what has he to boast of, since 'tis entirely owing to the Lord *Jesus Christ* that he is so ? This is that great Contrivance which Faith approves of.

(2.) As for the *Nature* of this Approbation which Faith gives of it, whereby it evidences its own *Truth* and Reality, we may take it up in Four Things.

1. Some *Knowledge* of it. Approbation ever implies Knowledge : There is no approving of that which we know not. And before we do approve this blessed Contrivance, we must see it in a *supernatural Light* : None will ever approve of it, who see it only with a carnal Eye ; for to such 'tis foolish and weak. To save Sinners by a crucified Saviour, in such a Way as to ascribe all the Glory of it to the Grace, Mercy and Love of GOD, without allowing Man to divide the Spoils with GOD, is *Foolishness to the Greeks*, and a *stumbling Block to the Jews*, 1 Cor. i. 23. and it ever will be so, unless to those into whose Minds and Hearts GOD has *shin'd*, to give the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD in the Face of Jesus Christ*.

2. It takes in the Heart's *Satisfaction* with GOD's *Ends* and Designs in this blessed Device. What these are ye may understand from what we

did

did just now discourse to you. They are easily reducible to these Three. *First.* He aims at the *Salvation* of his own Elect. *Secondly.* He designs to save them in such a Way, as that they shall have *no Share* in the Glory of their Salvation. *Thirdly.* He designs to have *all the Glory* of it to his own *blessed Name*. Now, when one approves the Gospel Contrivance for the Salvation of Sinners, then his Heart is satisfied with all these Designs. The first of them would relish well enough even with a carnal Heart; 'tis natural to every one to desire Salvation: But the other Two will never go down with any, who is not, by a Day of GOD's Power, made willing. Nothing but omnipotent Grace can make Man content to *stoop so low*, that the LORD alone may be *exalted*.

3. This Approbation takes in the Heart's Satisfaction with the *Means* GOD has made Choice of for compassing these blessed Designs. The Mind sees them in GOD's Light; and the Heart rests in them as proper and sufficient, such as became the Wisdom of GOD to appoint and make Use of, in order to the Attainment of these Ends: And hereon,

4. There ensues, the Heart's *cleaving* to this Contrivance, even to the whole of it, with universal Satisfaction, being *fully content* with it in all its Parts, and preferring it to all other Ways; nay, not only so, but counting them Loss and Dung, so it may have an Interest in this Way and Method of GOD's contriving. This is that Acting of saving Faith that gives a sure Title to

Christ and all his Purchase. He that thus approves of this blessed Device, in so doing putteth to his Seal, that GOD is true in the Record he hath born; and this is the Record that GOD hath born, that he hath provided Life, and that *this Life is in his Son*, 1 *John* v. 10. When once a Sinner is brought this length, then GOD reaches all his Design, gets all that Glory that he is seeking: And therefore no more can be required in order to the Sinner's obtaining the Advantage of that Contrivance. It were easy to make it appear, that all the Descriptions of saving Faith that we find in the Scriptures terminate here. I proceed now,

(3.) To enquire particularly how Faith doth approve this Contrivance; or, *what is in it* that it doth approve: And in Answer to this, we say Faith approves of it

1. As a *Way full of infinite Wisdom*. The manifold Wisdom of GOD shines with such a dazzling Lustre in the Eye of Faith, that it fills the Soul with Admiration at the Depth of Wisdom that doth appear in this blessed Contrivance, which reconciles the seemingly irreconcilable Interests of Justice and Mercy in GOD, the one whereof seems to rest satisfied with nothing short of the Sinner's Death, and the other demands his Life: Moreover it admires this Contrivance, because it reconciles these Two seemingly irreconcilable Desires, viz. that of the Glory of GOD and that of our own Salvation. Both these we should ever have, and both these every one that's savingly enlightned will have: But how they could have been together in the same Soul

the Wit of Men or Angels could never have contriv'd : For the Glory of GOD's Faithfulness in his threatnings, of his Authority, Purity and Wisdom in his Law, seem to rest satisfied with nothing short of the Sinner's Destruction ; therefore in desiring the Glory of GOD he must have at once desir'd his own Damnation, and consequently in desiring his own Salvation he must have desir'd GOD's Dishonour. But now this blessed Contrivance lets us see how these Two, may be not only reconcil'd, but made *inseparable* one from the other. Further, as Faith approves of and admires the Wisdom of GOD in the Contrivance, so

2. Faith approves of this as a Way full of Love and Goodness ; and consequently as that which highly suits the Nature of GOD, who represents himself as Love. *GOD is Love*, 1 John iv. 8. And the Soul sees and perceives a blessed Suitableness betwixt GOD's Nature and his Actings. Hereby it perceives the Love of GOD in that he laid down his Life for his People. This is that which the *Apostle* takes Notice of, *Ti. iii. 5, 6, 7.* But after that the Kindness and Love of GOD our Saviour toward Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour : That being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life. Thus Faith sees this way, as that which is full of Kindness, Grace, Mercy and Love ; and 'tis highly pleas'd with it as such.

3. Faith approves it as a Way wherein much of the Power of GOD appears, in that it infallibly obtains his End. *Christ crucified to the Jews is a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness; but to them that believe, he is the Wisdom of GOD, and the Power of GOD.* They see more Power, Strength and Efficacy in it, than any Creature can pretend justly unto; and therefore they do, on this account, approve of it, as becoming the omnipotent GOD.

4. Faith approves of this Way as that which exceedingly honours GOD's Law in all its Parts. The Obedience that the Son of GOD gave to it in his Life, was the highest Honour it was capable of; and therein there was a glorious Testimony of Respect given to the Authority of GOD, his Wisdom, Goodness and Purity, in the framing of the Law: Nor was the Sanction of the Law less honoured by *Christ's* undergoing the Penalty in his Death, than the Precept was by the Obedience of his Life.

5. Faith looks upon this Way as a Way that's full of Peace, and approves it as such, all Challenges being answered by it. The Law has nothing to demand. If it require perfect Obedience, then *Christ* hath fulfilled all Righteousness, and so is become the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believes: If it demand the bearing of the Penalty, then *Christ* has done that also: *he became obedient even unto Death*: So that he answered the Law in both its Demands. GOD, by raising him from the Dead, declared himself satisfied, both as to the one and as to the other.

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And GOD justifying, Conscience has no more Right to open its Mouth against the Sinner. Thus is the Peace and Comfort of the Sinner excellently provided for by this Contrivance: And Faith approves of it with respect to this.

6. Faith approves it as a Way full of *Security* for poor Sinners. The Soul doth by Faith see Provision laid in against all these Things whence it has any Reason to fear Hurt; and all this put in the Hand of one who is wise to dispense it seasonably, and has engag'd to do no less. It sees a Fountain standing ever open, for preventing any Hazard from the Guilt of Sin: It sees Armour laid in, for preventing any Danger from the Power of Sin; and withal Strength provided, for the Management of that Armour. In one Word, it sees what is sufficient to satisfy all its Desires here. These may be all reduc'd to Two, GOD's *Glory*, and its *own Salvation*. Here it sees them so well provided for, that they are now not only *consistent*, but *link'd together*, after such a Sort, that not only the Salvation of Sinners is consistent with the Glory of GOD, but moreover the greater the Sinner be, the greater Glory has GOD in his Salvation: And upon this account the Heart doth approve this blessed Device, as that which in particular is suited to its own Salvation, counting it a *faithful Saying*, and *worthy of all Acceptation*, that *Christ came into the World to save Sinners, of whom it self is chief.* Hereon the Soul cleaves to this Way with Satisfaction and Delight, as the only Way wherein its own Salvation and GOD's Glory are both provided for. I proceed now,

(4.) To enquire how Faith doth discover its Satisfaction with, and Approbation of this Way of Salvation. And this it doth,

1. By the Soul's betaking itself, in all its Straits, Fears and Storms, to this as its Anchor. If Guilt be charg'd upon the Soul, it has no other Relief but this: If the Temptation represent GOD's Glory and the Soul's Salvation inconsistent; the Soul flees to this, as to its only Refuge: If Death and Judgment and its Appearance before GOD present themselves to the Soul's Eye; it fixes only on this, as that which alone can give it Relief in all its Perplexities.

2. In that the Soul doth ever confidently reject all other Ways that may be tendred. Other Ways there are which will offer themselves to the Soul in its Straits for its Relief; such as *Diversions*, to take off the Mind, *Duties*, to satisfy the Conscience, *Promises* of Amendment for the future: Faith rejects all these as insufficient; it will not look to them for Relief.

3. When at any Time, through the Power of Temptation, any Thing has been attribute to Self, to a Derogation from the Glory of Grace in this Contrivance, Faith will discover its Satisfaction with this Way, by the Soul's *Displeasure* with its self, for *discrediting* this blessed Contrivance.

4. The Soul discovers its Approbation of this Way, by that *high Satisfaction* and Delight which it takes in its own *Conformity* to it. When Faith gets the Soul moulded into the very Frame of this Contrivance, resting in this Way, taking

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Shame to it self, attributing all to GOD; then it fills the Soul with refreshing Sweetness and Satisfaction. The Conformity the Soul sees in its self to this Way, makes it lovely to it self.

5. It discovers its Approbation of this Way, in that it will *refuse* to *abandon* it. Sometimes through the Power of Temptation, it may be made to fear exceedingly, that it get not hold taken of this blessed Device: But it will not be beat from this, that 'tis a Way sufficient and able particularly to save it, could it but bring it-self to venture on it. Therefore it will lay the Weight of its Salvation upon this Way, and none other; and the Doubts that are in such a Soul, are not about the Sufficiency of the Way, but about its own being in it.

II. But passing this *Mark*, I shall now offer a *Second*. Wherever saving Faith is, it will discover it self, by leading the Believer to an *Approbation of the whole Law of GOD*, not only as *holy*, *just* and *spiritual*, but as *good*.

A Stranger to the Faith of GOD's Elect, may approve of *some* of the Commands of GOD. A temperate Man may applaud highly the Law that forbids Drunkenness: The Churl may approve the Law that forbids Prodigality. In a Word, every one may approve such Precepts as strike not against his own peculiar Sin or Sins: But the Believer approves the *whole Revelation of GOD's Will* concerning Man's Holiness and Obedience.

An Unbeliever may be induc'd to own the Law to be spiritual, just and holy; but never can he, nor will he be induc'd practically to own it

as good: Here it sticks. 'Tis only Faith that can say, that his Commandments are *not* grievous: For the *carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of GOD, neither indeed can be.* The Light of Nature may oblige Men to judge such and such Things lawful or unlawful, just or unjust; but the unrenewed Will can never be induc'd to bend toward the Law of GOD as that which is good. Whatever it may be said to do as to some of GOD's Commands, yet it can never have an *equal Respect* to them all, for an unrenewed Will is not subject nor can be subject to the Law of GOD. 'Tis Faith that receives *Christ* as a King, and so subjects the Soul to all his Laws. It receives him as *the King of Salem*, the King of Peace, one that has fram'd all his Laws so, that they all concur to promote that great End of Government, the Peace of his Subjects. And this engages the Soul to *love* the Law of the LORD, and to *delight* in it. *O how love I thy Law,* says the Psalmist, *it is my Meditation all the Day,* Psal. cxix. 97. The righteous Man's *Delight is in the Law of the LORD*, Psal. i. 2. And it is only the righteous Man who can delight in the Law of the LORD; for, if we speak strictly, the Ungodly, the Unbeliever, can delight in or approve of none of GOD's Laws. Sometimes indeed, as has been said, the unrenewed Man may reflect with Delight on some of GOD's Precepts; but he has no Regard to them as such: 'Tis rather the *Things* enjoyn'd, than the *Precept* enjoyning, that pleases him. 'Tis not the *Congruity* of the Thing to the *divine Will*, but to his own *Inclination*, that gains his Approbation.

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Now what say ye to this Evidence? Can ye say, that ye do approve of, and consent cheerfully to the whole Revelation of GOD's Will, concerning that Holiness and Obedience which he requires of us in the Scripture? Such as do indeed *approve* thus of the Law of GOD, may, it is like, be perplex'd about it; while others, who are *alienate from the Life of GOD*, will boldly pretend unto it. To these bold Pretenders I shall only say, if they wilfully deceive themselves, they will one Day smart for their Folly: And if they do hold fast this Mistake, it will issue in another, and that an irrecoverable one; it will make them stumble into Hell, instead of going to Heaven. As for such who know not well whether they do thus approve of the Law of GOD or not, I shall endeavour their Relief, by mentioning some of the ordinary Ways whereby the Soul is wont to express or discover its Approbation of the whole of that Obedience and Holiness which GOD requires of us, and that even while 'tis at the lowest Ebb of Strength and Comfort.

I. The believing Soul *looks* at that *Change of its Nature*, and its Renovation into a Conformity to the Law of GOD, with *unspeakable Satisfaction*. None doubts, who knows any Thing of the Gospel, that all Believers are renewed and changed, *born again of the Water and Spirit*, renewed after the Image of GOD, being *created again in Christ Jesus to good Works*, Eph. ii. 10. I do moreover suppose, that all who have undergone this Change since they came to Years, are in

in some Measure *conscious* of it. I do not say that every one can see distinctly all the Lineaments and Draughts of the new Creature, every particular Law written upon the Heart; or that every one can even see so much of this Change, know its Renovation so far, as to be sure that he is a new Creature, created in *Christ Jesus* to good Works. But few, if any, of the Persons named will be found, who cannot say, and who do not know, that once they had no Liking to Holiness, or to the Law of God, but had an Aversion from Conformity to it; but now, if they feel no more, yet they see a *Desire* of being *universally holy*, and that they have no Quarrel at it. Thus far they see and know. Now this Change is satisfying, in some Measure, to the believing Soul: It looks back with Delight to it, and thereby discovers its Love to the Revelation of God's Will concerning Holiness.

2. The believing Soul discovers its Liking to the Law of GOD, by *cherishing* and entertaining the *Motions* that it finds in itself *towards the Law*. In the Renovation of our Natures, we are made *Partakers of the divine Nature*: We have a Principle of Life, a new Heart implanted in us: And this, tho' it be not always discernible, yet is ever acting and exerting its Power in Motions and Inclinations toward the Law of God and Obedience thereto. Every Believer cannot but feel these in himself, if he observe carefully. Now, the believing Soul entertains and cherishes these, and takes a peculiar Delight in so doing; he has Peace and Rest while he

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does it. *Great Peace have all they that love thy Law.* Whereas, on the other Hand, he has none when he does otherwise.

3. It conceives a *particular Satisfaction* in such Acts of Obedience as carry in them any *good Degree* of Conformity to the Law of GOD. When a Believer attains to Liveliness, Spirituality, and Concern, joined with Self-denial, and a Dependence on the Lord *Jesus Christ* for Acceptance in any Duty or Act of Obedience, then he is pleased therewith: And herein he discovers a great Love to the Law, respecting both the Matter and Manner of the Duty performed.

4. The Believer discovers his Delight in the Law of the LORD by that *sweet Complacency* and Satisfaction which he will find in any Measure of this Holiness that *others have attained to*. Faith looks at the Holiness required by the Law transcribed into the Lives of fellow Believers, and is highly pleased therewith; and the more there is of it transcribed into the Walk and Life of any, the higher Value it will teach us to put upon them. It makes us look on such as have any Thing of this Image of GOD, as excellent and happy. If the Believer cannot see himself conformed to this Law, yet he is pleased to see others, and looks upon them as the *excellent Ones of the Earth*. If he cannot get his own Heart so engaged as he would wish; yet he will look upon them as happy *in whose Hearts are the Ways of GOD*. This is a clear Proof of the Believer's being pleased with, and of his delighting in the Revelation of the Will of GOD concerning Man's Holiness, when he is delighted with the

Picture

Picture of it, wherever he sees it, in himself or others.

5. The Believer discovers his Liking to GOD's Law, that enjoyns Holiness, in that *he will not entertain the least Dislike of it*, when he is under the *greatest Temptations* to do so. When he falls under Apprehensions that he shall be ruined for Want of a due Compliance with the Law, he may well be displeased with himself, but he will not be so with the Commandment, *Rom. vii. 10, 11, 12. The Commandment which was ordained unto Life, I found to be unto Death: But the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, just and good.* However it be with me, whatever becomes of me, though I die and perish; yet the Law is good. The Soul under the Conduct of Faith, tho' it cannot reach a full Compliance with the Will of GOD, yet it dislikes nothing in it. Tho' the Law enjoyns Duties *cross* to its natural Inclinations, attended with great Difficulties and interfering with Interests in the World, yea, and such as expose to great Hazards; yet it will entertain no Dislike at any Thing in this good Law, nor desire to have any Alteration or Abatement. Its self it would have changed, and brought to a Compliance with the Will of GOD; but never will it desire any Alteration in the Law. It may desire some Alteration sometimes in GOD's providential Disposal of its Concerns; but as to the Commands which respect our Holiness and Obedience, it wills, it wishes no Change; and this is a sure Proof of its high Esteem of the Law.

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6. That Soul that is under the Conduct of Faith, will bewray its Satisfaction with the Law, by its *Displeasure* with its self, upon every Occasion, wherein there is any new Discovery of its own want of *Conformity* to the Law in any notable Instance. No sooner comes it to understand, that it has fallen short of Conformity to, or swerv'd from the Law in any notable Instance, but 'tis filled with *Self-abhorrence*. Holiness it would be clothed with, and likes; and therefore when it gets a View of its self without it in any eminent Measure, it cannot be reconciled to it self.

7. Faith discovers its Approbation of the Law, by filling the Soul with Desires and Longings after a Conformity to the Law. It puts that Prayer of the *Psalmist* in the Soul's Mouth, *O that my Ways were directed to keep thy Statutes*, *Psal. cxix. v.* That *Psalms* is full of such Desires, which are so many illustrious Proofs of the *Psalmist's* Faith.

8. To conclude, The Soul under the Conduct of Faith shews its Approbation of, and Satisfaction with the whole Revelation of the Will of GOD concerning that Holiness he requires of Man, by refusing to be *satisfied with any Condition*, wherein it falls short of a *full Conformity* to it. Tell such a Soul, That GOD is reconciled to it; nay, tho' GOD himself intimate to the Believer's Soul, that he is reconciled to him, that he has forgiven his Sins, that he means to take him to Heaven, that it shall pass the Power of Devils or Men to disappoint him of Heaven: Yet all this will not make him satisfied

fied, till he obtain a full *Conformity* to the Law of GOD. The Believer says with *Haman* in another Case, *Eſther* v. 13. *All this availeth me nothing, ſo long as I ſee Mordecai* : So long as I ſee any Sin, nothing can ſatisfie fully : But when I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy Likeneſs, *Pſal.* xvii. 15. Never will I be ſatisfied till I be like thee, ſays the believing Soul. Now, if ye can ſay that ye do thus approve the whole Revelation of the Will of GOD concerning Duty, then ye do believe; if not, ye do not believe. Proceed we now to a

III. Mark, whereby ye may know whether ye do believe or not, and that is taken from the expreſs *Teſtimony* of the Apoſtle *Peter*, *To you therefore which believe he is precious*, 1 *Pet.* ii. 7. Wherever there is Faith, it raiſes *Chriſt* high, and places him on the Throne, both in the Mind, and in the Affections. Now, how is it with you? Is *Chriſt* precious to you? (1.) Have ye many *Thoughts* about him? ſerious and ſober *Thoughts*, I mean. Few of you, I fear, have ſo; and a ſure Proof this is, that ye have no high *Esteem* of, and ſincere Love for him. (2.) Are ye at much Pains to commend him to the *Esteem* and Affection of others, eſpecially of thoſe whom ye love moſt? What ſay ye to this, Parents, Children, Huſbands, Wives? take ye Care to commend *Chriſt* to one another? (3.) Do ye prize *Opportunities* of ſeeing *Chriſt*, of getting into his Acquaintance? Do ye prize the Means of his own Appointment, for getting Discoveries of him? (4.) Can Ordinances ſatisfy you without him? Can ye this Day go home

home from this House, as great Strangers to *Christ* as ye came, and yet go *well satisfied* with your Day's Work ? Then I dare say ye do not believe. (5.) Do ye resolutely part with every Thing that comes in *Competition* with *Christ* ? When you must lose the World or *Christ*, or disoblige the World or *Christ*. Which of the Two do ye make Choice of ? (6.) Can *other Things satisfy without Christ* ? If so, then truly he is not, and cannot be said to be precious to you.

Other Marks of Faith I shall now pass ; and shall reduce those Three that I have given you to *three Questions*, which I crave Leave to pose your Consciences seriously upon. 1. Are you pleased with, do you rest *satisfied with Christ Jesus himself* ? See ye any Loveliness in his Person, or is he to you, one void of Form or Comeliness ? 2. Do you renounce your own *Wisdom, Righteousness and Strength*, and venture your All upon his Wisdom, Righteousness and strength ? (3.) Are you pleased with his Yoke ? do you really think his *Burden light*, and his Yoke *easy* ? If ye dare assert then, that ye have seen, and are pleased with the *Person of Christ*, that ye are satisfied with his *Provision* for your salvation, and with his Yoke ; then I dare in *Christ's Name* assert you Believers.

I shall conclude this Use, by speaking a little of several Sorts of Persons among you. We have now been laying before you some Marks or Characters whereby ye may know your selves. Let me therefore seriously, as in GOD's Sight, enquire of you, have ye applied those Characters

sters to your selves, that ye might know what your State is, whether ye do believe or not? Some, I hope, have made Conscience of doing so, out of a real Desire to be at a *Point* in this great Matter: Others, I fear, have not been at Pains to be satisfied in this Matter, either out of *Carelesness*, or out of *Fear*, that possibly the Result of the Trial might not be satisfying; or out of a *vain Presumption* that it was needless.

To the latter Sort, I say, (1.) Is it not worth your while, to know whether ye do believe on the *Lord Jesus Christ* or not? Care ye not whether ye be *saved* or *damned*, whether Heaven or Hell be your Portion? (2.) Have ye no Regard to the *Command of GOD*, that bids you *try your own selves, and prove your selves*, that bids you, *give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure*? (3.) Tho' ye be afraid to know the worst, and endeavour never so industriously to *hoodwink* your selves, ye will be *made at last to know* what ye are. (4.) Supposing the worst, whether will the Knowledge of the worst *now*, or *hereafter*, when there will be no Remedy, be most unpleasant and terrible? (5.) Are ye so sure that ye *need not* a Trial? Have not others thought themselves Believers, and yet have found themselves in a Mistake? (6.) Your Carelesness, and Neglect of trying, is a *sufficient Trial*: It plainly shews that you are *not sincere*, that you are Unbelievers; and therefore we shall list you amongst them. Believers not only try themselves, but do moreover apply to GOD that he may try them, *Psal. cxxxix. 23.*

Search

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Search me, O GOD, and know my Heart: Try me, and know my Thoughts.

As for those that have been at Pains to apply these Things to themselves I shall put this Question to them. Do ye believe on the Lord Jesus, or do you not? Ye may be cast, all into three Sorts and Ranks.

1. Some of you are found *Unbelievers with a Witness*; and your Sin is written in legible Characters, even as it were with a Sun Beam.

2. Some have *endeavour'd* to know, but *scarce can determine whether they do believe or not.*

3. A third Sort there is, *who can say they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I shall speak shortly to each of these Sorts of Persons, and then conclude this Subject.

First. I shall address my self to *Unbelievers*, who make, I fear, the most considerable Part in this Auditory. To this Sort belong all the openly Profane, Swearers, Dunkards, Liars, unclean Fornicators and Adulterers, Profaners of the LORD's Day; and moreover all grossly ignorant Sinners, all Self-righteous Sinners, all habitual Neglecters of Duties, secret, private or publick; in one Word, all who do not approve of GOD's Contrivance for the Salvation of Sinners, who approve not the Law of GOD, to whom *Christ* is not precious. I shall speak to you, as shortly as may be, of your *Sin*, your *Danger* and *Duty*.

(1.) I begin with your Sin. I shall not insist in discoursing of the Nature of Unbelief in the general; I shall only name some of the Ingredients in your Sin. If one be accused of *Mur-*

der, Adultery, Incest, or the like, his Name is presently odious, and every one looks on him as a Monster, and that justly. Yet your Sin goes a Step beyond any, or all of these: It has no Parallel. While ye view it in Bulk, it appears little: I shall therefore give you a View of it in its Parts, and expostulate with you in reference to your Guilt.

1. Is it a small Thing to you, O Unbelievers, to trample upon the Authority of GOD, to contemn it in the most signal Instance? GOD has put a special Stamp of his Authority on the Command, to believe on the Lord Jesus, *1 John iii. 23. This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ,* and will nothing less serve, than to attack that Command which GOD has declared his most special Regard to.

2. Is it a small Thing with you, Unbelievers, to charge a Lie upon the GOD of Truth? And this is your Sin, *1 John v. 10. He that believeth not GOD, hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that GOD gave of his Son.* Nay, you seal this monstrous Untruth, That the GOD of Truth is a Liar; for as he that believeth putteth his Seal to the Faithfulness of GOD, so the Unbeliever calls GOD a Liar, and sets his Seal to it.

3. Ye impute Folly to the only wise GOD, and that in the most signal Instance of his Wisdom. *All the Treasures of Wisdom* are laid out on this Contrivance. Here is manifold Wisdom, *Wisdom in a Mystery*, the Admiration of Angels, the Wonder of the World for Wisdom. Is it

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it then so light a Matter for you to charge GOD, as ye do, with Folly? Unbelief calls it *Fooliness* in the Abstract; while Faith calls this Contrivance *Wisdom*, and even a Master-piece of Wisdom.

4. Ye charge GOD with a *Defect of Goodness*, and reject, yea, trample upon his Love, Grace, Mercy and Kindness. This is the Glass wherein alone all these Things are to be seen; herein appears the Love, the Kindness, the Mercy of GOD: This is his Name whereby he desires to be known, *The LORD, the LORD GOD merciful and gracious*; this is his blessed Face which he has discovered to us under the Gospel. Unbelief breaks the Glass wherein GOD's Goodness is to be seen, blurs this Title and Name which GOD values himself upon, spits in the very Face of GOD, and contemns that Discovery he has made of himself. In a Word, it makes an Attempt upon the very Life of GOD, in this Matter. It endeavours to rifle his Cabinet, and carry away the most precious *Crown Jewel* in Heaven, that Glory which he will not give to any other, that's dear to him as his Life. The Believer, like *Abraham*, *Rom. iv. gives Glory to GOD*; and the Unbeliever *takes it away* as much as possibly he can.

5. Ye who are Unbelievers call *Christ accursed*, whom GOD has blessed, in whom all the elect Ones are blessed, whom all the Angels and Saints above do bless and eternally praise. Was it not enough that our *Lord*, while on Earth, did suffer of this Sort from his unnatural Country Men, that ye must add to their Wickedness?

It may be, ye may think to refuse the Charge: But this is a vain Attempt, it cannot do. Where *Christ* has once been preached, every one either says that *Jesus is the Lord*, or calls him at best *practically accursed*, and rejects him as an horrid Impostor. And is this a small Sin to treat the *Lord of Glory* so?

6. As if this were not enough, *ye embroe your Hands* in the Blood of GOD, *crucifying to your selves afresh the Son of GOD*, and practically owning and avouching as yours the cursed Impiety of the *Jews*. Believe it, not upon my Word, but upon the Testimony of GOD's Word, that they may have a Hand in crucifying *Christ*, who never saw him in the Face. Those we find charged with this Guilt by the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, *Heb. vi. 6*. We have no Reason to suspect that most of them ever saw *Christ* in the Face.

7. But may not all this suffice? Has not the Son of GOD suffered enough at your Hands, when ye treat him as a cursed *Deceiver*, and with the wicked *Jews*, cry out by your Practice, *Crucify him, this Fellow is not worthy to live*? But must there be some further Evidence of your Spite against the Lamb of GOD? Ay more, every Unbeliever *tramples under Foot the Blood of the Son of GOD*. 'Tis not enough that *Christ* is malign-ed, and by your Practice refused as an Impostor; but ye must crucifie him: And as if your Spite could not terminate with his Death, ye trample his Blood under Foot. Ye have already, in Practice, rejected *Christ*; there wants but one Step to involve you in the Guilt of these of whom the Apostle

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Apostle says, *Heb. x. 29.* that they *trod under Foot the Son of GOD, and counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy Thing.* All Unbelief has something of this in it.

8. And that nothing might be wanting to enhance your Guilt, all this is done under the *Pretence of Friendship*; ye cry, *Hail Master*, and then crucify him, *ye betray the Son of Man with a Kiss.* Ye wear his Livery, eat his Bread, call him Master; and yet *lift up the Heel against him*: A Crime not to be parallell'd by any but that of *Judas*; the *Jews* own'd themselves his Enemies. See *Heb. x. 19.*

9. That the whole Trinity may bear its Proportion in your cursed Opposition to it, ye do *Despise unto the Spirit of GOD.* What can be an higher Contempt of the Spirit of GOD, than to *refuse* his Testimony, *resist* his Strivings, and thereby grieve him; and this every one of you has done many a Day.

10. Ye *declare a Gospel Ministry useless*; ye call not only Ministers, but all who have owned Christ, Fools: Ye justify their Persecutors, and mock both GOD and Man in your professed Adherence to the Name of Christ, and Profession of Religion. In one Word, ye *reject* Christ, *resist* his Spirit, and *maltreat* his Ambassadors.

Thus far have we shortly laid before you your *Sin*, with the like Brevity I shall

2. Represent your *Danger.* Unbelievers, ye sit secure, ye fear no Ill. Ye do perhaps promise your selves Peace, and, with the Fool in the Gospel, have long ago sung a *Requiem* to
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your selves: Soul, take thee Rest. Well were it for you, could ye always deem so: But think on it, this will not do; I assure you your *Hazard is great* beyond Thought, as secure as ye sit. That I may, if possible, awaken you, I shall shortly tell you *what* it is ye are in Hazard of, and then shew wherein your *Hazard* lies. And if after a just Consideration of these Two, ye think it not worth while to provide for your own security, then sleep on.

If ye ask what ye have to fear; I shall give you a short Account of it, from Four Scripture Expressions.

1. 'Tis *Damnation* ye have to fear. *He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.* So says the Scripture, *Mark* xvi. 16. *Damnation*, tho' jested at by some, is yet a very grave and momentuous Thing. A Sentence pass'd by the great Judge, before so solemn an Assembly as that of Angels and Men, adjudging poor Sinners to Hell by an irrevocable Sentence and unalterable Appointment, is sure no light Matter.

2. 'Tis *Wrath* the Unbeliever has to fear, and is in Hazard of. He that *believeth not* is *condemned already, and the Wrath of GOD abideth on him*, *John* iii. 18, 36. And *who knows the Power of GOD's Wrath?* Who can endure the Anger of an incens'd GOD? This Expression is design'd to point forth the Severity of the Sentence. 'Tis borrowed from Men, who, tho' they may sometimes calmly, without any Anger, punish; yet when they are in Wrath, they deal with greater Severity, and are not influenced with these miti-

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gating Considerations which sometimes bind up their Hands. The angry Man designs not the Good of the Person he punishes, as the other does, but his Ruin. So when GOD designs to ruine impenitent Sinners, he is said to deal with them in Wrath, 2 *Theff.* i. 8, 9.

3. 'Tis *Destruction*. This tells the Event. They who *fear not GOD, know him not, and obey not the Gospel*, are doom'd to *everlasting Destruction*, 2 *Theff.* i. 9. Ruin or Destruction is the Doom of Unbelievers. Their *Hopes for the future*, as well as their *present Enjoyments*, are entirely destroyed, and that with an everlasting Destruction.

4. 'Tis call'd *Punishment*; and this points out the Nature of that which ye are in Hazard of. 'Tis a Punishment, and that a *severe one*, proportioned to your Crime. The Love of GOD, as great as it is, is contemn'd, by rejecting the Gospel Proposal for the Salvation of Sinners; even the Love of the Father, which is so highly commended in *giving his Son*, and the Love of the Son that's so highly magnified in *giving himself*. This Punishment will be proportioned to the *Value* of that Blood that's trampled upon. If ye be charg'd with so great a Debt as is the Price of the Blood of GOD, it will not be soon paid. 'Tis great in Proportion to the Means enjoy'd, whereby ye might have obtain'd an Interest among GOD's chosen Ones, had ye managed suitably. In fine, 'tis great in Proportion to that Salvation which is slighted, the Greatness whereof we did illustrate at some length formerly. *If the Word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received*

ceived a just Recompence of Reward ; how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was afterward confirmed unto us by them that heard him? Heb. ii. 2, 3. He that despised Moses Law died without Mercy, under Two or Three Witnesses : Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under Foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy Thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace ? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, and I will repay, saith the LORD.

But wherein lies our Hazard, will ye say, of all these Evils ye speak of ? I answer, Ye are indeed in eminent Danger. For,

1. The Nature of GOD makes your Punishment necessary. Sin, every Sin, is the *abominable Thing which GOD hates*, Jer. xlv. 4. Much more is Unbelief so, which, on the account formerly mentioned, has something in it *beyond other Sins*.

2. GOD has threatned Unbelievers with Wrath, Damnation, Destruction, and Punishment ; and when once he threatens, all his Attributes stand engaged for the Execution. Has he said, and will he not do ?

3. He has impartially *punish'd others* : And is not this Proof enough of the Measure ye may expect to meet with ? The Carcases of the *Israelites* fell in the Wilderness for Unbelief.

4. There is no possible Remedy for your Sin. Such as reject *Christ*, reject the only Remedy ; and if

we

we sin wilfully after we receive the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries, Heb. x. 26, 27.

5. To make all sure, the *Oath of GOD* is engag'd for your Punishment, *Heb. iii. 18.* and to whom *sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believed not?* Had we Time to discourse of these Things at length, your Danger might be easily manifested.

(3.) I shall now shut up what I have to say to you, in a short Account of your *Duty*, having already laid before you your Sin, and imminent Danger. The Sum of this is that which is contain'd in the Words of our *Text*, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Before we come to press this Duty upon you, we must acquaint you, that we come not in *our own Name* to treat with you upon this Head; but under the Character and Notion of *Christ's Ambassador*, cloth'd with a Commission from him. We do come to you in *his Name*, and shall treat with you according to the Instructions received from our great Lord and Master. According to our Instructions then, we do in his Name *demand* and *require* several Things, all comprehended in that short one, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. That ye do *own* and *acknowledge* your selves Fools, blind and ignorant Sinners, utterly void of, and incapable by your own Endeavours to attain to any Measure or Degree of the saving Knowledge of *GOD*; and that ye do receive, rest, rely and believe on the *Lord Jesus Christ*,
for

for Instruction, Wisdom and Understanding of all Things that are needful to be known, in order to your Acceptance with GOD, and partaking of his Salvation. *Trust in the Lord with all thy Heart, and lean not to thine own Understanding,* Prov. iii. 5. *Let no Man deceive himself, if any Man among you seemeth to be wise in this World, let him become a Fool, that he may be wise,* 1 Cor. iii. 18. which he can no otherwise be, than by trusting entirely to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is made of GOD to all them that believe, Wisdom.

2. We do, in our great Lord and Master's Name, demand and require, that in your Appearances at the *Bar* of God, or of his Deputy your own Conscience, to answer for your Sins, ye do never once *look to*, or in the least expect to be absolved, acquitted, or justified, on account of any *Righteousness of your own* ; but that ye shall here disclaim and refuse your own Righteousness entirely, without offering to plead in your own Justification, your own *Doings* or *Sufferings*, resting and relying only upon that Righteousness which *Christ* has wrought, pleading only that *Christ* has suffered all the Punishment that the Law did threaten you with, and has yielded a full and complete Obedience to all its Demands in your *Name* ; to which Righteousness, passive and active, ye trust, as that only whereby ye can be *absolved* at the Bar of GOD from the Charge laid against you, and *have a Title* to that Life and Happiness which is the promised Reward thereof. Ye must, with the *Apostle*, Phil. iii. 9. *Count all but Loss and Dung, that ye may*

win Christ, and be found in him, not having your own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith.

3. Whereas ye have by your Sins rendred your selves justly obnoxious and liable to the Displeasure, Anger and Wrath of the holy and just GOD, we do require, that ye shall never offer to him your own Faith or Obedience, your Doing or Suffering, your Prayers or Tears, as a Satisfaction for the Offence done him, or a propitiatory Offering to atone him and turn away his Anger ; but that ye do trust only to the Lamb of GOD, whom we set forth as a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, in whom alone God is well pleased with, and accepts of Sinners.

4. We do further demand, in Christ our Master's Name, that ye believe on and receive him as your absolute and sovereign LORD ; that ye readily and cheerfully obey all his Commandments, that ye willingly submit to his providential Disposal of you.

5. We do require, that ye do believe on and receive him, as the Author, Preserver and Maintainer of spiritual Life, and of the whole Work of Sanctification ; to whom alone ye are to trust, for the Beginnings, Progress and Completion of a Work of Sanctification, he being made of GOD Sanctification as well as Righteousness to all them that do believe.

6. We do further demand, that ye do all in the Name of Christ, Col. iii. 17. and that ye attempt no Duty, go forth against no Enemy, but in his Name and Strength, and under his Conduct ;
trusting

trusting to him only for Strength, Protection, Throughbearing and Acceptance.

In fine, to sum up all, we do, in our great LORD's Name, require a *present* ready *Compliance* with all and every one of these Demands. We have no Instructions to allow you one Hour's Delay. *Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation ; and to Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* We have no Commission to speak of to Morrows. Nor will we, nor can we, nor dare we *part* these Demands. Comply with *all* or *none*. That short one in our *Text* implies them all and more, which we shall not now insist upon, having at length opened up the Nature of this Duty in our Explication of that *Doctrine* which we now are improving.

This is the Substance of what we do in our LORD's Name *crave* ; and we are instructed to *press* those Demands, and urge your Compliance with them, (1.) by *Intreaties*, (2.) by *Commands*, (3.) by *Threats*.

(*First.*) Know then, O Unbelievers, tho' our blessed LORD and Master might peremptorily require Obedience to, and Acceptance of these Demands, and, upon the first Refusal, turn you all into Hell ; yet such is his Condescension, that he has given us in Commission, to *beseech* and intreat your Compliance. Therefore, *as Ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to GOD*, which can no otherwise be, than upon an Acceptance of the Terms we have proposed to you. We want not Motives to enforce our Petition ; we are rather straitned with the

Num:

Number of them, than with Want. We have so many in our View, that we know not where to begin, nor how to end.

I. We earnestly, in *Christ's* stead, beseech your falling in with the Demands made upon you, which are in themselves *worthy of all Acceptation*. We crave no unreasonable Thing, when we bid you believe on the Lord *Jesus Christ*. The Request is suited to all the *Principles of Reason*. What more suitable than for the Creature to grant the Request, comply with the Desire (pardon the Expression) of the Creator? What more suitable to that rational Principle of *Self-preservation*, and *allowable Self-love*, than for a Captive to accept of a Deliverer, a Slave to receive a Redeemer, a condemned Malefactor to welcome a Pardon, a Sinner to entertain a Saviour, a Wanderer to lay hold upon a Guide, a poor Man to accept of Riches when offered, and a pursued Offender to betake himself to the City of Refuge? Nothing sure can better quadrate with that Principle that's interwoven in the very Frame of our Natures. *Again*, what more suited to our *Interest* than this? This is a rational Principle, when kept within just Bounds; and it has a great Influence for ordinary upon the Actions of Men. *Interest*, real or mistaken, rules the World: And never did it more appear than here, pleading strongly for your Acceptance of, and Compliance with our Desire. A Compliance will take you from the *Dunghil* to the *Throne*, will enrich Beggars with all the Fulness of God; will make the Children, nay, the Slaves of Satan, Heirs of Heaven, and advance them

them to the Estate and Dignity of being Sons of the most High. 'Tis not a few Things, but all Things, that ye may make yours, by accepting of this Offer. If ye believe, *all Things are yours*, Things present, and Things to come, Grace and Glory; *all are yours, and ye are Christ's*. Once more, Nothing more suitable to that Principle of *Gratitude*, that's judg'd to be so much suited to the Nature of Man, that he cannot forgo it, without sinking himself a Degree below the very Beasts. Nothing, I say, is more agreeable to *Gratitude*. He who gave you all that ye possess, to whom alone ye must ow all that ye shall to Eternity enjoy, asks this *small and reasonable Boon*, this just Desire; and we in his stead beseech, intreat and obtest your Compliance. Shall we get a Refusal, when our Demand is so highly reasonable? *Reason, Self-love, Interest, Gratitude*, all second our Request. If ye refuse in this, if ye will not hear these *seconding and urging* our earnest Request, then we take GOD, Angels and Men to witness against you, that, rather than comply with the Desire of the Ambassador of *Christ*, supplicating you in his Name, you will not stand to counteract all the Principles of Reason, Self-preservation, Interest and Gratitude, to hear whom ye will not refuse in any other Case.

2. We beseech you, in *Christ's* stead, to accept of him; for we dare say, *he is worthy* of your Acceptance, worthy for whom ye should do this Thing. He is *the only Begotten of the Father*, and is possessed of all the glorious Perfections of the Father; he is the *express Image of his Person*, the
Image

Image of the invisible GOD. And as upon account of his *personal Excellencies*, so upon account of the *good Offices* he has done you, he deserves good Treatment at your Hand. He has honoured your Nature, by joyning it to his own, in a glorious and mysterious *personal Union*. He has given the most pregnant Proof of *matchless Love* to lost Sinners : He left the Father's Bosom, to bring them there ; he died, that they might live ; he suffered, that they might be saved. In a Word, all the Perfections of the divine Nature, all the Perfections of your own, all the Wounds, every Drop of the Blood of the crucify'd Saviour of the World, all the Tears he shed, all the Drops of Blood he in his Agonies did sweat for the Relief of poor Sinners ; all cry with one Voice, Sinners, we beseech you believe on the Lord *Jesus*. Can you refuse what is crav'd by such an one ?

3. We pray you, by the *Mercies of GOD*, in the *Bowels of our Lord Jesus*, believe on him, accept of him ; for his Heart is upon this Request. Nothing more acceptable to him, than a Compliance with this Call ; he laid the Foundation of this Offer we make to you, in his own Blood ; he wept at Sinners Folly, that would not comply with it ; he has institute a Gospel Ministry for this very end, and has been, if I may so speak, at a vast Expence of Gifts and Grace for the Maintenance of this his own Ordinance. He has given them most peremptory Orders, to call you, to beseech you, to command, to threaten, nay, to compel you to a Compliance. Will

ye refuse our Master that Request he has so much at Heart ?

4. We beseech you, accept of him now, grant our Request, as ye would have *yours* granted by him, at that Day when ye shall be oblig'd to *supplicate* him, standing before his Bar, as Panels before the Judge of all the Earth. None shall have their Request granted in that Day, who will not grant ours now. Will ye not then hear our Master now ? If ye refuse him now, how will ye think to obtain any Favour from him then ?

5. We beseech you, in the Name of all the *glorious Trinity*, to grant our Demands. We are Ambassadors for *Christ*, and God doth beseech you by us. God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, do all joyn in the Supplication. Never were there such Three Names at a Supplication, never such Three Hands at a Petition. O Sinners, what Hearts have ye, if ye can refuse the Desire, the Supplication, the Intreaties of a whole Trinity ? All the Love of the Father, all the Grace of the Son, and all Blessings that are enjoy'd by Communion with the Holy Ghost, all plead with you for your Compliance. Can ye refuse us then, O Sinners, O Rocks, O Hearts harder than Rocks ?

6. Once more, we beseech you, be ye reconcil'd to God, accept of, and believe on our Lord *Jesus Christ* ; for we assure you, in our great Master's Name, he is *no ordinary Suppliant*. He never came with such a Supplication to the *fallen Angels* ; he never came with it to *many Nations of the World*, who would, we make no Doubt,

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Doubt, welcome it, if they knew it, and had it. Kings are not ordinary Petitioners, and therefore 'tis no wonder if they take ill with a Repulse.

Now, O Sinners, what Answer shall we give to him that sent us? what Return shall we give to our Master? Shall we say, that we came to the Congregation of *Ceres*, that we shew'd his Commission, told our Errand, in his Name supplicate for a Compliance with his Demand? But that ye would not hear him, though we besought you, in his Name, by all the *Ties of Reason*, Self-preservation, Interest and Gratitude, by the *glorious Worth of Christ*, by all the *Marks of his Love to Mankind*, by all his *Concern for Sinners*; and that we had a whole Trinity seconding us, and that yet we met with a Refusal? Are ye willing that we *take Witnesses* upon this Refusal, and, in our Master's Name, *protest*, that this our reasonable, nay, advantageous Request, was refus'd? 'Tis a Wonder that ever the Commands of a God should be disobey'd; but 'tis yet a greater, that ever the Request, the Intreaty of a God should be deny'd. Be astonish'd, O Heavens, at this, GOD *beseeching*! and Man *refusing*!

(*Second.*) If this will not prevail with you, then know, that we are instructed by our great Lord and Master, to make use of his *Authority*, and, in his Name, to *command* your Compliance. We do therefore, in the Name of our Lord and Master *Jesus Christ*, *command* every one of you, Young and Old, Rich and Poor, High and Low, to believe on him, and receive him. Beware of despising

despising his Authority. If ye be wise, obey his Command : For

1. Never was there a Command given by any King, that deserved more Respect, upon account of the *Matter* of it. If ye look to it, ye will find it nothing else but this, *Christ* commands you to be happy, commands you to *Heaven*; and will ye, out of a Hatred of GOD's Authority, damn your own Souls?

2. Obey this Command ; for 'tis his, who is *KING* of *Kings*, and *LORD* of *Lords*, the *Prince* of the *Kings* of the *Earth*, the high and only *Potentate*, who, on account of the supereminent Excellency of his Nature, his Interest in us by Creation and Preservation, has the unquestionable Right to our Obedience without any Reservation.

3. Dispute not this Command ; for it is his, who did *command* you out of nothing, and who can, with the like Facility, *command* you into Hell, which is infinitely worse than nothing.

4. If ye will obey this Command, we have an Allowance, in his Name, to *make Offer* of himself, and of all his glorious Purchase ; and, according to our Commission, we do here, in the Name of our great Lord and Master, offer him for *Wisdom*, *Righteousness*, *Sanctification* and *Redemption* ; we offer him, and all he has, to every one within these Doors. Whoever ye be, whatever your Sins are, tho' as great as ever were the Sins of any of the Sons of *Adam*, we do here offer *Christ* to you, and do promise, that, if ye will accept of him, he will in no wise cast you out ;

nay,

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may, he shall save you, make you *Sons* of GOD, nay, *Heirs*, yea, and *joynt Heirs* with himself. *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and ye shall be saved.* Take him, and have him; take him, and have with him all Things; all the Blessings that the infinite, eternal, electing Love of the Father, design'd for his chosen Ones; all the Blessings that the precious Blood of God, one Drop whereof was of more Value than Ten thousand Words, did purchase; all that the *great* and *precious Promises* of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come, are able to grasp or comprehend; all that quick-sighted Faith, that looks from one Eternity to another, from eternal electing Love, projecting Mercy, to eternal Salvation, flowing from that Fountain, can set its Eye upon; all that the enlarg'd Capacity of a perfected Soul can hold or desire to all Eternity: In one Word, all that a God can bestow, or a Creature receive; if ye receive Christ, all is and shall be yours.

(*Third.*) But if we can neither prevail by Commands nor Intreaties with you, then we give you to understand, that we have it in Commission to urge you to a Compliance by *Threatnings*.

1. If ye believe not, now in the *accepted Time*, in *this your Day*, then the Things which belong unto your Peace will be *hid from your Eyes*. Our Master will give over treating with you, call home his Ambassadors, or give them Commission to turn to others; as we find he did, when the *Jesus* rejected the Gospel Offer, *Acts* xiii. 46. *Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of GOD should first have been*

been spoken to you : But seeing ye put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting Life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles ; for so hath the LORD commanded us.

2. We do, in our great Lord and Master's Name, *proclaim War* against you. Unbelievers, finally rejecting *Christ*, are to him as *Amalek*, with whom the LORD has sworn he will have War from Generation to Generation.

3. We are bid tell you, in our Lord's Name, O Unbelievers, that tho' ye *disobey* one Command, ye shall be made to *obey* another, nothing so much to your *Comfort* and Advantage. If ye obey not that Command, *Believe and be saved* ; then ye shall be obliged to obey that, *Go, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. Now, choose you which ye will obey. This Day ye have had *Life* and *Death* set before you ; either then ye must choose *Life*, and live, or choose *Death*, and die. An Answer we do, in our Master's Name, demand. If once he call us back, and forbid us to treat any more with you ; if he give up dealing with you, then we may say, *Wo* to you when he departs from you. When he *calls home* his Ambassadors, he will *send* his Armies in their Room, who shall *destroy* those Rebels, *who would not that he should reign over them*. Ye have *Life* and *Death* before you, choose which of them ye will.

Having thus addressed my self to Unbelievers among you, I shall now

Secondly. Speak a Word shortly to you who, after Search, are in *doubt* about your selves, whether ye do believe or not. Waving many Things

I once

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I once design'd, I shall address you in a few Words.

1. I must confess, your Case is *very sad* and deplorable. Nothing more woful, than to be thus in *Suspence*, without knowing what your Case is. You hang betwixt Heaven and Hell: If ye be concern'd about your State, a sad Conflict betwixt Hope and Fear will torment you. You can have no Comfort in any Enjoyment, if ye continue so. O what a lamentable Case are ye in! for ye *run a Risque* for Eternity, and *lose* the Comfort of Time.

2. Think on't, I assure you, it will be a Work of *Difficulty* to get *Satisfaction* about your *Believing*. The Words whereby this is set forth in Scripture, do all import Pains. 'Tis not just to look, and to be at a Point; but there is *Searching, Proving, Trying*. The Candle of the LORD must be lighted, and ye must search; the Touchstone must be brought, and ye must prove your selves; the Furnace must be kindled, and ye must abide the Trial; ye must put your selves in the Balance, which he holds who is a God of Judgment, by whom Actions are weighed.

3. *Rest not* in this State: *Give all Diligence to make sure your Calling and Election*. GOD'S Authority, your own Comfort, the Credit of the Gospel, the Glory of *Christ*, bid you all haste out of this State.

And, for your *Direction*, I shall lay before you the few Particulars following, which if ye observe, will do much to rid you of all your Doubts, through the Blessing of God, by the Interposition of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

1. Conclude not that ye want Faith, because ye do not see or find all these Things in your selves, which others have found, either *before*, in the Time, or *after* the LORD's working Faith in them, whereby they are united to *Christ*. Some have a strong Law-work of long Continuance before Conversion : Some have much Distinctness, Confidence and Clearness, at the very Time of Conversion, which enables them to give a distinct Account of the Time, Place and Means of their Conversion : And some have much Joy and high Manifestations afterwards. But tho' ye come not their length, ye have no Reason thence to conclude your selves Unbelievers, since in some the Exercise is neither so intense, nor of such Continuance as that of others, only 'tis such as is sufficient to take them out of themselves to *Christ* ; and this is all the Sense of Sin that's absolutely necessary. Some cannot, amidst the Mist raised by their own Corruptions, Satan and the World, see GOD working upon their Souls ; nor can they reach that Joy and Comfort in believing which others do ; nor are they admitted to see *Christ* upon the Mount, in high Manifestations of his Glory.

2. Conclude not that ye are Unbelievers, because ye see not all Things, as they *should be* with you. Sin in *Being*, Sin *raging* and *tyrannizing*, Sin in the Heart drawn out into some Acts of Impiety, and prevailing in various Degrees, are no sufficient Evidences of the Want of Grace, or of the Want of Faith. Yet let none sin because Grace abounds.

3. Study

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3. Study the *Nature of the Covenant of Grace* well. This will be exceedingly helpful to you, and remove many Rubs out of your Way, and answer many of your Doubts; particularly study to know

(1.) The Ground of your *Acceptance* with God, and of your Admission and *Access* into a Covenant Relation: 'Tis not your *Freedom* from Sin, 'tis not Freedom from *gross* Sins, nor is it any Thing wrought in us, or by us; but only the *sovereignly free Grace* of GOD in *Christ*, which glories in removing the greatest Offences, in bestowing the choicest Mercies upon the Chief of Sinners. Therefore none can be ruin'd, whatever his Sins be, who is willing to ow Salvation to free Grace in *Christ*. The greatest Sinner may be sav'd in this Way as well as the least: There is no odds with free Grace; 'tis no more difficult to forgive the *worst* of Sinners, than to forgive the *least* Sinner. Nay, the greater Persons Sins be, as they have greater Need, so they have the greater Encouragement to come, in regard that GOD has declared, that the Design of all his Dealings with Sinners, is the Glory and Advancement of his Grace in their Salvation; and that the greater the Sins of such as do apply to Grace for Salvation are, the more is it glorified. But beware that ye sin not because Grace abounds. There is here great Encouragement to such as *are* great Sinners, but none to any *to be* so. Shall we sin because Grace abounds? God forbid.

(2) Study the *Condescension* of the Covenant to the State of Believers, who carry about with them

them still a Body of Sin and Death, while they are here in this House of their Pilgrimage. It accepts of sincere Obedience, it provides Influences for enabling Believers to perform it, it provides Pardon for Failings.

(3.) Study Acquaintance with the *Springs* of that *Covenant-peace* which Believers enjoy in their Walk with GOD. 'Tis not their *own Merit*, but *GOD's Mercy*: 'Tis not their *own Blamelessness*, but the Efficacy of *Christ's Blood* to take away Spots: 'Tis not the Evenness of our Walk and our Freedom from Trips; but 'tis the *Testimony of a good Conscience*, bearing Witness, that 'tis our Exercise to have and keep a *Conscience void of Offence toward GOD and Man*, by continual Dependence on GOD in *Christ*, for Mercy to remove Sin, and Grace to help in Time of need. Endeavour to understand these Things well, and you will then be soon eas'd of many of your Fears.

4. Acquaint your selves with these Marks of Grace, which point at its *Being*, rather than its *Degree*, and are to be found in the Soul under all its Temptations. Such are these which we nam'd already, and cannot now stand to repeat.

5. Pray for the *Influence* of that Spirit, which *searcheth the deep Things of GOD*, and can let in such a Beam of Light into the Soul as will clear to you fully what's your State.

6. Once more, I say, *wait* upon the LORD in the *Use of all Means*, and then ye shall know your State. There is much of Sovereignty in GOD's Way of dealing with People about this Assurance now sought after. *When he giveth Quiet*

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Quietness, who can give Trouble? and when he hideth his Face who can behold him? Job xxxiv. 29. Therefore wait his Time. The Husbandman waiteth for the precious Fruits of the Earth, and hath long Patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter Rain, Jam. v. 7. Light is sown for the Righteous, Psal. xcvi. 11. Impatience, Frowardness, Sloth, and Weariness, are Indications of a Soul not in a very good State: Therefore wait; for 'tis good that a Man should both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of GOD, Lam. iii. 26.

Thirdly. We come now to speak to such, as can upon *solid Grounds* say, to the Praise of the Glory of GOD's Grace, that *they do believe on the Lord Jesus*. We had once some Design to hold forth your Duty at length from another Scripture; but this we shall wave, at least for some Time, and only at present bespeak you very shortly.

1. Has GOD wrought the Work of Faith with Power in you? then *blest his Name. Take the Cup of Salvation, call upon the Name of the LORD, and offer Praise to him who remembered you in your low Estate, because his Mercy endureth for ever.*

2. *Walk humbly with your GOD.* Pretences to Faith, without Humility, are most vain. 'Tis peculiar to Faith, to lay Man low, that GOD alone may be exalted.

3. Ye are by Faith ingrafted in *Christ*, then *bring forth much Fruit*; for hereby will he be glorified, and hereby will ye make it appear, to your own Satisfaction, and the Conviction of others,

thers, that ye are engrafted upon that Root of Jesse.

4. Ye have by Faith acknowledged *Christ* your Head. *Depend on him* for Influences of Light and Strength, that he may be all and in all to you.

5. Be *tender of his Honour and Glory*. The Honour of your blessed Lord and Master should be dear to you, and will be so, if ye be indeed his Disciples.

6. *Pity those ye have left behind* you in black Nature, *without GOD, and without Christ, and without Hope in the World*.

7. *Endeavour their Salvation*. Commend *Christ* and Religion to them, by your Practice, and by your Conversation.

8. *Sympathize with, and seek the Good of GOD's People*, to them ye are joyn'd in Society under the blessed Mediator's Conduct and Government; that it may thereby appear that ye are Members of the same Body, of which *Christ* is the glorious and exalted Prince and Head.

CONCLUSION.

WE have now for the Space of Eight Lord's Days laid before you, who are in a State of Nature, your Sin, Misery and Hazard. We have for fifteen or sixteen Sabbaths more insisted on the Way of your Escape, and have urged you to betake your selves to it.

Now

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Now I shall conclude all with that Question of the Prophet, *Isa. liii. 1. Who hath believed our Report? To whom is the Arm of the LORD revealed?* What Man, what Woman is there in this Congregation, that has *believed our Report*, in the Discovery we made either of Sin, or of the Saviour of Sinners? Are there none at all? Have we spent our Strength in vain, and laboured in the Fire? Have we cast the Gospel Net so often, and caught nothing? Shall we give this melancholy Account of our Embassy to you? *LORD, we came to the Congregation of Ceres, and displayed thy Terrors before their Eyes; yet none was alarm'd. We proclaim'd a Saviour, but none received our Report. They would none of thee, but rejected the Counsel of GOD against themselves.* Must we with *Elias* be made to intercede to GOD against you? If we be put upon this, we have a heavier Charge against you than he had against *Israel*. *LORD, says he, they have killed thy Prophets, and digged down thine Altars, Rom xi. 2, 3.* But we must say, *LORD, they have killed thy Son, rejected thy Gospel, and mocked thy Servants.*

Now, as for you who have not believed our Report, I have Two three Words to leave with you. (1.) Ye are the Plague of the Church, the Burden of the Land, the *Achan* in our Camp. No Sin has so great a Hand in the LORD's Quarrel, as Unbelief. (2.) Ye are the Cumberers of the Ground; and who can tell but GOD, who has spared you long, and dung'd and digg'd about you, may issue forth that Command, *Cut it*

it down, why cumbreth it the Ground? (3.) The LORD be Judge betwixt you and us. We have warned you, and ye will not take Warning: We have offered *Christ*, and ye have refused him. What will ye answer at the Bar of GOD, when ye and we shall be sifted together, and we shall tell, LORD, we offered thee to these Wretches; but they would none of thee. (4.) *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World has blinded the Eyes of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Image of GOD, should shine into them,* 2 Cor. iv.

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To you, if any such there be, who have believed our Report, we say (1.) We bless the LORD who has *given you Counsel*, and desire to joyn in an eternal Song on your behalf, and to bear a Part in that blessed Consort, where your Salvation will come in as one of the Grounds of the Song. (2.) Whatever GOD has done for you, *ascribe the Glory of it to him*, and to him alone; for from the laying the Corner-stone, nay, from the first Wound of the Ground in digging a Place for it, to the putting on the Cop-stone all is his doing, and his only. If we have been instrumental, *pray for us*, that we may be *found of him in Peace* at his Appearance, and may be helped to a faithful Discharge, and a successful Management of our Work to the Good of Souls. (3.) Dearly beloved in our Lord, since we look for the Saviour, the Lord *Jesus Christ*, from Heaven, who shall change our vile Bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according

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to the Working, whereby he is able to subdue all Things unto himself, stand fast in the LORD : For what is our Hope, our Joy, our Crown, our Glory, in the Day of the LORD? Are not even ye, if ye stand fast in the LORD? Prepare for Sufferings. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must travel through Hardships and Difficulties. 'Tis the Character of the glorified Saints ; they are a People come out of great Tribulation, who have washen their Garments in the Blood of the Lamb. Prepare, stand fast ; and he who is able shall present you faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy. Jude Ver. 24.

To him be Glory in all the Churches.
Amen.

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T H E
Christan's Duty,
 W I T H
*Respect to both Personal
 and Family Religion.*
 P A R T III.

Josh. xxiv. 15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, chuse ye this Day whom ye will serve, whether the Gods which your Fathers served that were on the other Side of the Flood, or the Gods of the Amorites in whose Land ye dwell : But as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.

THIS Verse is a Part of the last Discourse wherewith *Joshua* the fam'd Captain General of *Israel* entertained that People at *Shechem*, whither he had call'd them together, that he might speak his Mind to them before his Death, as we may understand from the Beginning of this Chap-

ter.

E e

And

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And in this Farewell Discourse, he *first* reminds them of the humbling Story of their Forefathers Idolatry, before the LORD call'd them, in the 2 *Verse*, and thence to the 14 *Verse*, he entertains them with a short Rehearsal of the LORD's remarkable Kindness in the whole Course of his Providence to *Abraham*, and to his Seed for near the Space of five hundred Years, that is, from the Time of *Abraham's* being called, to the present Time wherein his Seed were put in the peaceable Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, according to the Promise made to *Abraham*. After this in the 14 *Ver.* he infers from the Whole a serious Exhortation to serve the LORD, of whose Goodness they and their Fathers had so ample Proofs, and to abandon those Idols whom their Fathers served on the other Side the Flood, the River *Euphrates*, and in *Egypt*.

And in the Words we have read, he presses this Exhortation:

1. By an *Argument*. And
2. By a *Declaration of his own Resolution*:

The Argument lies in the first Part of the *Verse*, *And if it seem evil, &c.*

For opening it we are

1. To see what *the Argument is*.
2. How *it is expressed*.
3. Why *it is so expressed*.

As for the Argument, it is shortly this, If while I exhort you to serve the LORD, and abandon strange Gods, I press you to nothing but what is evidently your Interest as well as your Duty, then surely ye ought cheerfully and of

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of Choice to comply : But so it is clearly ; for what can be more evidently for your Good, than to abandon Idols, which your Fathers found it their Interest to leave, and which were not able to deliver you from your Slavery in *Egypt* ; and Idols which were not able to defend their Worshipers against you, and to cleave to that GOD of whose Goodness ye have had large Proofs, and your Fathers also for a long Tract of Time ? This is the Argument.

Next. We are to look *How it is expressed* ; and we find that it is proposed

1. By laying down a Supposition, *If it seem evil, &c.*

2. By a Sort of Concession upon that Supposition, *Chuse ye this Day, &c.*

First. We say he makes a Supposition, *If it seem evil unto you, &c.* that is, if after all that ye have heard and seen of the Vanity of Idols, and the Advantage of the LORD's Service, ye can find just Reason to think it for your Hurt, I am not to hinder you from chusing where ye may do better. Now this Supposition imports the evident Absurdity of the Thing supposed, as much as if he had said, *If ye seriously consider Things, it cannot but seem just, reasonable and for your Interest, to serve the LORD.*

Secondly. We have, as it were, a Concession. *Choose ye this Day whom ye will serve,* that is, *If there be any with whom ye may be better, look out for them, and serve them !* And this, as the Supposition, implies also a strong Insinuation of the Absurdity of that which seems allowed, as much as if he had said, *'Tis clear as the Sun,*

if ye leave the LORD ye can no where be so well ; and therefore were ye left to your Choice and did choofe well, ye must serve GOD : Reason and Interest bind you to it.

That which we are now to confider is, why *this Form of Expression is used* ; why is one Thing in Appearance said, and the contrary meant ? He supposes that it may seem evil to serve the LORD, when he intends it highly absurd that it should do so : He refers it to them to choofe another, when he means that it is foolish to think of such a Thing : For answer, This Way of expressing it gives the Argument several Advantages.

1. It clearly proposes a very advantagious and engaging Discovery of GOD, as one that in the Proposal of Duty has such a Regard to Man's Advantage, that he would bid him do nothing, but what is for his Interest ; as if he had said, If this were not for your Good, and what may evidently appear to be so, I would not press it on you. Again

2. This Expression sets in a clearer Light the Absurdity of that which he dissuades from. Had he press'd them only by a plain Proposal of the Advantage of the LORD's Service, they might have heard this without a due Impression of the Evil of the contrary Course ; but now they cannot miss to look how hateful it is, when 'tis, as it were, posposed to them to consider and choofe.

3. Thus, by proposing what at present must appear detestable, it not only obliges them to an Acceptance of GOD's Service, but to a plain and

and suitable Declaration of their Abhorrence of the Service of Idols. This Effect we see it had upon them. For they usher in their Answer with a (*GOD forbid,*) which expresseth a Detestation of the Way refused.

4. This serves to insinuate a Suspicion of them, which might oblige them to declare themselves with more Plainness, and with more Vehemency and Concern; which might be a standing Witness against them and their Posterity, when straying from GOD. Now having opened this Argument, we shall next offer a few Observations from it, and so go on to the next Part of the *Verse*, which is the Thing we design to insist on.

And of many Observations we only offer the few following.

1. Every Man is obliged to serve some God. This the Argument not only supposes, but insinuates as a Thing ridiculous or so absurd, that it is not to be supposed that any rational Man can be guilty of rejecting all Gods; They must serve GOD or Idols.

2. The LORD binds no Man to any Thing but what is for his Good, and what may, and will, upon due Consideration, appear to be for it.

3. The LORD will have such as serve him, to do it upon a rational Conviction of the Advantage of his Service; and therefore says, *If it seem evil unto you, go where ye may do better.*

4. The LORD fears not the Issue of a fair Deliberation, and the serious Consideration and Comparison, both of what may be said for him,

and against him ; and therefore he bids them look if they could, upon a due Consideration, prefer Idols to him.

5. Such as look well to Idols, will soon see the Folly of them. 'Tis but look to them and ye must abhor them.

6. To be satisfied who is to be preferr'd, GOD or Idols, requires no long Time to deliberate ; 'tis but look and ye shall be satisfied, *Choose ye (this Day.)* Ye may be clear on the Point, says he, this very Moment before ye leave the Spot.

Thus far have we considered the Argument. We have next *Josbua's* own Resolution ; *but as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.*

This being that which we had the principal Regard to in the Choice of this Text, we shall more particularly notice every Thing in it. And

1. We have the Thing resolved upon, and that is the LORD's Service, Service, tho' it be sometimes more strictly taken in the Scripture, yet here is, no Doubt, to be taken in its full Latitude for the Whole of that Obedience that the LORD JEHOVAH, who has the only indisputable Title to our Obedience, requires. He is LORD, and we are universally in all Things, in all Respects subject to him ; and therefore obliged in all Things to serve him to whom we are accountable. Whence by the by observe, (1.) GOD has an unquestionable Title to Man's Obedience, he is (the LORD) in a Way of Eminence to whom Obedience is due from all. (2.) There is something engaging in GOD's

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Service sufficient, when known, to engage Man to make it his Choice, notwithstanding that strong Inclination he has to command, and that eager Desire he has of Liberty.

2. We have in the Words the Resolution itself, *We will.* There is no Constraint in it. 'Tis our Choice: Not only do we look upon it as Duty, that which we are bound to do; but we look on it as our Privilege, and our Will is set upon it as good. Whence we may again note

(1.) People should serve the LORD willingly; this is a binding Example, one approved of GOD, and proposed to our Imitation.

(2.) Such as know the LORD's Service, will make it their Choice.

3. We have the Person by whom the Resolution is taken, *Joshua*, an old Man, who had followed GOD through a Wilderness, and many Trials; and *Joshua*, a great Man, a great General. Here it may be remarked

(1.) That a long Trial of GOD's Service, even when attended with no small outward Disadvantages, will not make any forgo it, but rather engage them to it.

(2.) It derogates nothing from the Character of the greatest to serve the LORD.

(3.) As the Head of a Family may prevail much upon those in the Family, so his whole Interest in them, and Influence on them, whether Children or Servants, ought to be employed, in order to engage them to serve the LORD.

4. We have in the Words the Firmness of the Resolution insinuated, partly in the Declara-

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tion of it, and partly in the adversative Particle (*but*) *But as for me and my House we will serve the LORD.* *But as for me,* This Form of expressing it seems to import these three Things.

(1.) That he himself had considered the Matter seriously.

(2.) That he was come to a firm Resolution.

(3.) That whatever Way their Choice should fall, it would have no Influence upon him, to alter him. Whence observe

(1.) Acquaintance with GOD fixes People immoveably in his Way.

(2.) Such as do in Earnest engage in GOD's Way, from their own Acquaintance with it, will not depend upon others in their Resolutions.

5. In the Words we have the Extent of his Resolution. *As for me and my House;* which imports, we conceive,

1. A Desire of the People's engaging to do so, and is as much as if he had said, I would have you resolve upon it; and were ye as much under my Influence as my House is, I would use my utmost Interest to perswade you.

2. A direct Declaration of his own Resolution to keep firm to GOD's Service.

3. An Engagement to improve his utmost Interest, whether by Authority, Perswasion or Example, to engage all his own Family to follow the LORD; as if he had said, If I cannot prevail with all whom I would have engaged in the Service of GOD, yet I shall want none of those whom I may have any Influence o. Whence observe

(1.) Real

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(1.) Real Religion will make Men careful that *they themselves* serve the LORD.

(2.) It will not rest there, but will lead us to do our utmost for engaging *others*.

6. We have in the Words the Order ; he first speaks of *himself*, and then *his Family*: Whence we may note

(1.) True Religion looks first inward to a Man's *self*.

(2.) Where a Man is right engag'd *himself*, he will use his utmost Endeavours to have *his Family* engag'd also in the Service of GOD.

Now the Design of this Resolution, we may from the Whole see, is to enforce the Duty exhorted to in the former *Verse*, and it has a considerable Influence this way.

1. In that it speaks the Thoughts of a wise Man to favour the Way of GOD.

2. It contains the Thoughts of a dying wise Man in favours of GOD's Service, and finally of one that they stood under many Ties to have a special Regard to.

We design not to discourse all these Truths ; we shall therefore take up the Sum of this Resolution in Three Truths, which, if the LORD will, we design at some Length to insist on:

Doct. 1. *Such as engage in the Service of GOD, ought to do it deliberately, resolutely, willingly.*

Doct. 2. *True Religion begins at home ; or, a Man must be himself a Servant of GOD, before he can engage others aright.*

Doct.

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Doct. 3. *Where a Man is himself engaged in the LORD's Service, he will endeavour to have his Family engag'd also.*

The Rise of those Truths from the Words, we shall not insist upon, because it is sufficiently clear from what has already been said in opening them.

We shall now begin with the First of them :

That such as engage in the Service of the LORD, ought to serve him resolutely, deliberately and willingly.

That we ought to *serve the LORD*, innumerable Scripture Precepts require, and even the Light of Nature testifies.

And that we should do it *deliberately and resolutely*, our LORD, in the Parable of the foolish Builder, who counts not the Cost, *Luke xiv. 28.* plainly enough teacheth.

Nor is it less plain, that *Willingness* is required in order to Acceptance, since it deserves not the Name of *Service* that's constrain'd. Where the Will is wanting, nothing can be accepted; and where this is, many Imperfections will not hinder Acceptance, *2 Cor. viii. 12.* For if there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

But, that we may further clear this Truth, we shall

1. Shew you what it is to serve the LORD.
2. Shew what it is to do it deliberately, resolutely and willingly.

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3. We shall enquire why we are obliged to serve the LORD willingly, deliberately, resolutely.

4. In answer to an Objection that may be mov'd from the Doctrine of Faith in *Christ*, as we have formerly preach'd it, we shall endeavour to shew what Place there is for such Service in the second Covenant, and what Necessary of it even to Believers.

1. We are to begin with the First of those: And, that we may open unto you this Head, we shall comprise that Account we are to offer of the LORD's Service, in a few Remarks. And

1. Tho', by the Service of God, the Scripture means many Things, and uses the Expression in several Senses, yet there are Three Things principally and mainly call'd the *Service of GOD* in the Word. (1.) 'There is the *Solemn Service of GOD in the Duties of his Worship*: So we may understand our LORD's Words to the Tempter, *Matth. iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and him only shalt thou serve.* (2.) 'There is the *ordinary Service of God*, in the Course of our Walk with him: Of this it is the Apostle speaks, *Heb. xii. 28. Let us have Grace to serve the LORD with Reverence and godly Fear.* And (3.) 'There is the *extraordinary Service of God*, in some notable Duties, call'd for of some Persons, in some special Seasons; and from their Compliance with those Duties, they are called the *Servants of the LORD*: And thus *Moses, Rev. xv. 3.* is call'd the *Servant of God*, in a Way of Eminency. They who got the Victory are said to *sing the Song of Moses the Servant of the LORD, and the Song of the*

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the *Lamb*. And all these Three Significations are here intended, at least none of them can be excluded. We must serve the LORD in the Duties of his Worship, in the whole Course of our Walk, endeavouring to do always the Things that please him ; and when call'd to extraordinary Duties, we must not decline them.

2. There are Three Things requisite to fit a Man to serve the LORD, or to do any Thing that can justly challenge that Name. Men are not naturally fit for the LORD's Service ; and they far mistake it, who think that they may, just when they please, put to their Hand to the LORD's Work, and do it right. Nay, before ever we can do any Thing that God will own as Service, we must (1.) *Give up with our old Masters*. We are all by Nature the Servants of Satan and Sin: *For their Servants we are to whom we obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness*, Rom. vi. 16. And no less sure it is, that we all naturally serve and obey divers Lusts: But now we must renounce these before we serve the LORD ; for we are assured that there is no serving Two Masters. The LORD will not half it with Sin, *Matth*, vi. 24. *No Man can serve Two Masters : For either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other : Ye cannot serve GOD and Mammon*. And, I assure you, this is no easy Matter to get a Sinner and his old Master fairly parted ; no less than the mighty Power of God can do it. Sometime there may be Outcasts, but Matters are quickly made up betwixt them, and all a-
greed

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greed again, until God himself effectually persuade to a Separation. (2.) There must be a *fair engaging to Christ as our Master*. We must accept of him for our Lord. A Master will not allow one to come in and put to his Hand to his Service, unless he first covenant and engage to own him for his Lord ; and this is no easy Matter, to bring a Sinner, who is naturally an Enemy, to come this Length. To call *Christ, Lord*, is something more than to resolve, under a Conviction, to live better, and serve the LORD ; nay, 'tis somewhat more than, under some Work on the Affections, to go to a Corner, and make or write a personal Covenant. I fear, personal Covenanting, however good and justifiable in itself, yet is far mistaken, and much abus'd by some, while 'tis made a *Ground of Hope* by some who never understood what Conversion meant, never were humbled, and taken off their own Bottom, and engag'd to the LORD by the Power of his Grace. If any Man think this an easy Matter to call *Christ, Lord*, he has never yet done it to purpose. I am sure, the great Apostle thought it no easy Matter, but a Thing so far above the Line of Nature, that the Work of the Holy Ghost is requir'd to bring us to it, 1 Cor. xii. 3. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no Man speaking by the Spirit of GOD, calleth Jesus accursed ; and that no Man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* (3.) Before any can serve GOD, he must have a *Heart suited to the Work*. The carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of GOD, but opposite to every Duty. Before the Fruit be good, the Tree must be good. 'Tis
one

one of the many mad Attempts that a deceitful Heart and deceitful Devil put People upon, under Convictions, to *serve the LORD in Newness of Life*, with old Hearts: But they who have learn'd of *Christ*, Matth. vii. 17. that the Tree must first be made good, before the Fruit can be so, will know other Things. *First*. We must be created in *Christ*, and then we may walk in good Works, Eph. ii. 10. Now, not one Piece of Service that's acceptable can any perform, without these Three Prerequisites.

3. That ye may understand what it is to *serve the LORD*, we shall offer you this Remark, That, before any Piece of Work perform'd by us, can justly challenge this honourable Name of *Service* done to the LORD, it must have these Six Qualifications. (1.) It must be *a Thing commanded*, otherwise 'tis serving our own Fancy, and not the LORD. The Master's Precept is the Measure of the Servant's Obedience. We never find the LORD approving any for doing what he did not command them; nay, we find him, even when he has forbid Things, rather challenging the Doers because they did what he commanded not, than because they did what he forbade, Jer. vii. 31. *They have built the high Places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their Sons and their Daughters in the Fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my Heart.* And to the same Purpose is Chap. xix. 5. *Who required this at your Hand? Will one Day be the Entertainment of such Services as are done without a Command? And there is one Command that puts them all to the Door, Deut. xii.*

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32. *What Thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

(2.) There must be a *Regard had to the Authority of the Command* in the doing. If Men shall, upon sinistrous Motives, as very oft they may, do the Things that are commanded, GOD will not reckon this for Service done to him: Men, that cannot pry into the Hearts of the Doers, may, but such Deceits take not with GOD. 'Tis not Obedience, that is not done because commanded. 'Tis frequently repeated in the Erection of the Tabernacle, that every Thing was done *as the LORD commanded Moses, Exod. xvi. 34. and xxxiv. 4, &c.* and, that to intimate, that *Moses* in every Step had his Eye upon the Command, and so should we in every Thing eye the Command.

(3.) Every Duty, that it may be Service to GOD, must be done in the *Name of Christ*, GOD will accept of no Service but what is offered on this Altar, *Col. iii. 17. And whatsoever ye do in Word or in Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to GOD and the Father by him.* In the Name of *Jesus*, is, 1. By the Command of *Jesus*, *Matth. xviii. 20.* Nothing, I am sure, can be done in his Name, that has not the Warrant of his Command. 2. In the Name of *Christ*, is in the Strength received from *Christ*, *Luke x. 17.* It was the Name of *Christ*, that is, the Power of *Christ*, that cured the lame Man, *Acts iv. 10.* and it must be this that must enable us to Duty. 3. In the Name of *Christ*, is, in a Dependence upon him for the Acceptance of our Service; for all our Sacrifices must be offer'd upon this Altar, which

which sanctifieth the Gifts that are put on it.
 4. In the Name of *Christ*, is to the Glory of *Christ*. Nor will any Service be accepted, that runs not in this Chancel?

(4.) Every Piece of Service, that GOD will own as such, must be done in *Faith*. For without *Faith* it is impossible to please GOD; for whatever is not of *Faith*, is *Sin*. Now *Faith* looks at the Promise as its only Security, both for Through-bearing, Acceptance and Reward.

(5.) Service must be done in the *Manner* that's required. 'Tis not enough that the Thing be done, but it must be done in the Manner commanded; for even this comes in as a Part of the Command, *Psal. cxix. 4. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy Precepts (diligently.)*

(6.) Service must be done in the proper Time. GOD has fill'd up our Time with Work, and every Duty has its own Time, and we must do every Thing in its Season. *Every Thing is beautiful in its Season*; and, *To Day if ye will hear his Voice*. If the Command be to *Day*, Obedience to *Morrow* will not answer it. If any of these be wanting, then GOD will own no Duty as Service done to him.

4. To add no more, we offer this one Remark more, for clearing what is meant by the LORD's Service, and that is, That one may be called a Servant of the LORD, or claim this Title, it is not enough to do some one Piece of commanded Duty; nay, nor is it enough to multiply Duties: But (1.) There must be an equal Respect unto all GOD's Commands. *Then shall I not be ashamed when I have Respect unto all thy Commands,* says

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says the Psalmist, *Psal. cxix. 6.* The Heart must be reconciled to all, and count them to be right concerning all Things. (2.) There must be a fixt Bensail of Will towards a Compliance with them all. A Servant must have it to say with the Apostle, *Heb. xiii. 18.* that he is in *all Things willing to live honestly*, And (3.) There must be a constant and permanent Endeavour to comply with them. We must *shew the same Diligence to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End*, *Heb. vi. 11.* And surely, if these few Things were duly weighed, most who have hitherto lookt upon themselves as good Servants, would begin to be jealous of themselves, as mistaken in this Matter.

II. We are next to shew you what this *Deliberation, Resolution, and Willingness* is, which ought to accompany an Engagement in the LORD's Service. As for the

First of them, *Deliberation*, We shall open its Nature in the few following Observations, in as far as it respects our present Purpose. That what we do in Matters of great Moment, ought to be done deliberately, is what none will deny; and therefore none can question the Necessity of acting deliberately, when we engage our selves to the Service of GOD. Only some may be at Stand concerning the Meaning of it, which we shall endeavour to open.

I. When we say that Men should engage in the Service of the LORD *deliberately*, we do not mean, that they should take a long, or indeed any Time to consider before they do engage in the Service of GOD, whether they shall do it or

not. This is only requisite in Cases where 'tis hard to discern what is advisable, and where Duty doth not oblige to do any Thing presently without Loss of Time. Here all Things are quite otherwise: We are born under an Obligation to serve the LORD; and the Reasonableness, as well as Advantage of it, are so obvious, that to be ignorant of them, is to be culpably blind. Nor

(2.) Doth this Deliberation import any Doubt or Hesitation whether we may do better elsewhere: This were wicked and highly faulty. But,

(3.) To engage in the LORD's Service deliberately, is to engage upon *Knowledge* of that Service, which we devote our selves to. 'Tis the Sin, the Folly of many, especially when some way convinced of Sin, and the bitter Issue of its Service, that presently they resolve they will serve the LORD; but in the mean time they know not what it is to serve the LORD, either as to *Matter* or *Manner*. Most Part think that to serve the LORD, is only to perform some of the external Duties of Religion, and that without respect to any of those Circumstances we have mentioned. But all ought to know when they are in case to serve the LORD, *what Service* he requires, *what way* he will have it done; and all the Particulars mentioned formerly, when treating of the first general Head; for Explication of this Truth

(4.) That one may be justly said to have been deliberate in this Undertaking, 'tis necessary that he know so much of his Obligation, both by
Duty

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Duty, and Interest, to undertake this Service, that nothing that may afterwards fall in his way, may be able to make him think he has acted cross, either to Duty or Interest, in the Undertaking, or that he might have employed himself to more Advantage otherwise.

(5.) A Man that engages deliberately will look to all the Disadvantages, real or seeming, that attend this Undertaking, and know when he engages, that the Advantages will outweigh the Disadvantages. And,

(6) A Man that engages deliberately, will know that what he engages in, is practicable, and how it may be done. Upon the Whole, to engage in the LORD's Service deliberately, is to do it after we are acquaint with the Nature of the Work, and have so much Knowledge of the Advantage and Practicableness of the Undertaking, that nothing that falls in or may occur afterward, may be able either to make us repent our Undertaking, or quit it as impracticable.

Some know not the Service they bind themselves to, and therefore engage rashly, and when they come to understand it, they find it not suited to their Expectation, and therefore they quit it. Some know not the Advantage of it, and therefore when the Service of Sin seems to bid fairer, they rue their Bargain: Others look not at some seeming Disadvantages that attend the Service of the LORD, and therefore they begin upon Sight of them to wish they had not engaged in it: The *Psalmist* came near to this, *Psal.* lxxiii. 13. And in a Word, some bind themselves, without ever thinking what Strength

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the Work requires, and where 'tis to be got; and after Experience tells them, it requires more than they have, they are fair to quit it: But Deliberation prevents all these. And thus much for Deliberation.

2^{dly}. We must engage in the Service of GOD *resolutely*, that is

(1.) We must lay our Account with Difficulties, not indeed from the Service itself, for the LORD's Yoke is *easy*, and his Burden *light*; but from our own Corruption and Enemies, that oppose us in the Undertaking. Every one that puts his Hand to the LORD's Work, must lay his Account with fighting, as well as working: He must be like the Builders upon the Wall of *Jerusalem*, *Neh. iv. 17.* work with one Hand, and hold a Weapon with the other.

(2.) To engage *resolutely*, is to resolve not to quit the Work upon account of Difficulties, or say with the Sluggard, *There is a Lion in the Way, and I shall be slain in the Streets*; but to hazard all, and so surmount these Difficulties, or die in the Quarrel.

(3.) To engage *resolutely* in the LORD's Service, is to do it upon a Conviction, that we are not at Liberty, upon the account of any *real* or *seeming* Difficulty, to quit it; but that of *Necessity* we must not only engage, but in the LORD's Strength we must, in spite of all Difficulties, persevere to the End. But now

3^{dly}. This is not all, but further we must engage *willingly* in God's Service. Some do serve, but the Want of this spoils all. Now this Willingness

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(1.) Excludes *Constraint*. We must not, like the Slave that's bound, engage in the Work for Fear of the Whip. Some multiply Performances, others seriously, as they think, under Awakenings of Conscience, or Sickness, resolve to serve the LORD; ay, but 'tis only Fear, either of Hell; or the Lashes of Conscience, that obliges them to it, cross their Inclination: Take these out of the Way, and they would not serve the LORD.

(2.) Willingness excludes *selfish Regards*, such as only eye the advantagious Consequences of God's Service. Some serve the LORD, like *Jehu*, because they see it makes at present for their Interest; but if it were not so, they would act otherwise: And some, out of Hopes to get Heaven for their Service, do the same. But this will not do: This is indeed a Sort of Constraint; for, could the Service, and its Consequences, be parted, the Service would not be chosen.

(3.) Willingness imports a *liking* of the Service as well as the Consequences, a Suitableness in the Will to the Service, which makes even the Service itself the Object of our Choice, and makes it, even when the Consequences are not eyed, appear agreeable and pleasing: And this can never be where the Heart is not renewed; for *the carnal Mind is Enmity against GOD, is not subject to the Law of GOD, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. And therefore, till a Day of GOD's Power change the Heart of Man, and create him in *Christ Jesus* to good Works, there is no Possibility of engaging *willingly* in the Service of GOD, *Psal. cx. 3.*

III. We are now come to offer some Reasons why we should engage in the Service of GOD, *deliberately, resolutely, and of Choice.* Of many we name a few.

1. It is *suitable to the rational Nature*; for we debase our selves, and act not like reasonable Men, if we act not *resolutely, deliberately and willingly* in a Matter, especially of so great Moment. Not to act deliberately speaks us foolish; not to act resolutely speaks us weak; and not to act willingly speaks us Slaves.

2. The *Nature and Honour* of GOD makes such Service necessary. That Service which is unbecoming a rational Nature, cannot surely be acceptable to GOD, who is the highest Reason. What is reproachful to the Nature of Man to perform, must surely be so to the Nature of God to accept. If Man cannot act indeliberately, irresolutely or unwillingly, without reproaching his Nature, surely the holy GOD cannot accept of what is so done, without reproaching his own. And if it be dishonourable for Man to perform such Service, as is not the Fruit of Deliberation, Choice, and Resolution, surely 'tis also dishonourable for GOD to accept it.

3. The *Nature of the Service* requires it; for 'tis called, *Rom. xii. 1. our reasonable Service.* 'Tis so by way of Eminency, and surely without those Three Properties mentioned, it cannot deserve that Name.

4. Unless it be done thus, we are not like to continue in it; and this will be both dishonourable, and disadvantageous. What is rashly undertaken,

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taken, is usually quickly given over; what is ir-
resolutely engaged in is easily hindred, and
what is the Fruit of Constraint cannot be per-
manent; and this spoils all: For unless it be
continued in, *we lose what we have wrought*, and
all the length we have gone, will not be remem-
bred, *Ezek. xviii. 24. When the Righteous turneth
away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity,
and doth according to all the Abominations that the
wicked Man doth, shall he live? All his Righteousness
that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his Tres-
passes that he hath trespassed, and in his Sin that he hath
sinned, in them shall he die.*

IV. The only Thing remaining, is to shew,
what Place now under the Gospel Dispensation
is left for this Service; and that in Answer to a
common Objection that is made against it, upon
Supposition of admitting the Doctrine of Faith,
may some say, "If we believe, what ye not
" long ago taught, that we are to be justified
" only by Faith, then what need of serving the
" LORD? what need of Holiness? If the O-
" bedience of another must be our Righteous-
" ness before GOD, we may spare our Pains:
" There is no need that we obey."

This Objection is old indeed, and I may say
'tis new also. 'Tis one of the many Artifices that
the Enemies of the Grace of GOD, have made
use of for discrediting the Justification of Sinners
before GOD, by the imputed Righteousness of
Christ; and at this Day 'tis mightily urg'd by *Pa-
pists, Socinians*, and especially *Arminians*, who
swarm in these Lands: And therefore before we

come to answer it, we have Two or Three Things to say in reference to it. And,

(1.) We do indeed confess, that any Doctrine that has not a favourable Aspect upon Holiness is to be suspected; and we do profess our selves willing, that our Doctrines shall be tried by their Influence upon Holiness: And further, we do solemnly protest, that as soon as the Charge laid against the Doctrine of Faith, shall be fairly proven, we shall abandon it. But,

(2.) We are not resolved to quit it, because some Men whose Lives and Pens smell not over much of Holiness, are pleas'd to alledge that it favours not Holiness.

(3.) We must say, it seems very hard to alledge, that *Calvin's* Doctrine of Justification, is an Enemy to Holiness, while the Opposers and Enemies of this Doctrine, at the same Time nickname the Maintainers of it, *Puritans*, *Precisians*, and I know not what, because they will not take so great a Latitude in their Practice as themselves; nay, frequently, because they cannot get their Walk condemned, they pass a Judgment upon their Hearts, and usurp GOD's Prerogative, calling them *Hypocrites*.

4. We hope to shew sufficient Reason for Holiness, and to give it a very useful Room, tho' we allow it not that Place, which is due to the Righteousness of the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

What Place will you say has it? of what Use is it? I answer, by shewing,

1. What Place it has not: And we say

(1.) It is of no Use in order to merit any thing either in Time or Eternity at the Hand of GOD;

it

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it cannot merit or deserve the least temporal Blessing, far less can it deserve Heaven, and those glorious spiritual Privileges that are there enjoyed. *What, can a Man be profitable unto GOD, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Or is it Gain to him that thou makest thy Ways perfect? Job xxii. 2, 3. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine Hand? Thy Wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy Righteousness may profit the Son of Man, Job xxxv. 7, 8. Our Goodness extends not to him, and therefore it becomes us when we have done all, to own that we are unprofitable Servants.*

(2.) Our Service we do to the LORD is not that, upon the account whereof we are justified before GOD. When we stand at the Tribunal of GOD, to be tried for our Life, our Plea must not be, LORD, we have served thee according to thy Law: This will stand us in no stead, *for by the Works of the Law will no Flesh be justified, Gal. ii. 16.* Our Service, if weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary, will be found wanting.

(3.) Our Service will not be so much, as a Part of that Righteousness, upon the account whereof we are to be justified before GOD: *Christ will not half the Matter so, either he will be our entire Righteousness, or not at all. He will not compound the Matter, for so we should have somewhat to boast of, and should not glory only in the LORD.*

(4.) Sincere Service, by the gracious Acceptation of GOD, is not put in that same Place under

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under the Covenant of Grace, which perfect Obedience had in the Covenant of Works. This is contrary to the whole Tenor of the Scripture. But what need, will ye say, can there be of this Service, since it is not allowed to have any Part in our Justification? We answer, by shewing,

2dly. And positively, That 'tis of very great Use, and there is an indispensable Necessity of it, and that,

(1.) Upon the account of the *Command* of GOD. Now this binds still, and would have bound, tho' there had been no Reward annexed to it; and this is still in Force, for *this is the Will of GOD, even our Sanctification*, 1 *Thess.* iv. 3.

(2.) 'Tis indispensably necessary, in regard of the Believer's *voluntary Engagement* to it. When Faith once gets a View of *Christ*, it says to him, as *Thomas* did upon another Occasion, *My Lord, and my God*; and if once we call *Christ* LORD, we thereby bind our selves to be his Servants.

(3.) 'Tis necessary *from the new Nature*, Regeneration. Believers are *created in Christ Jesus to good Works*, Eph. ii. 10. They are born again; they are Partakers of the divine Nature. Now, our LORD assures us, that a good Tree cannot bring forth bad Fruit. Know, *whosoever is born of GOD sinneth not*, John v. 18. 'Tis as natural for the new Man to be holy, as for the old Man to be otherwise.

(4.) 'Tis the necessary Result of these principal Graces of the new Creature, *viz. Love and Gratitude*. Hear the great Apostle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* v. 14. 15. *The Love of Christ constraineth us, because*

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cause we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

(5.) 'Tis necessary that we serve the LORD, in order to obtain the great Ends which all Believers do propose to themselves; as (1.) 'Tis the Way to glorify the LORD, which is certainly the Believer's main End; and hereby certainly is GOD glorified, if we bring forth much Fruit. Hence that Exhortation, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. v. 16. Again, (2.) 'Tis the Way to be made meet for the Enjoyment of GOD, which the Believer aims at as one of his principal and most noble Designs. Now, the more we abound in the Service of GOD, the more meet we are for the Enjoyment of GOD, who is of purer Eyes than to keep up Communion with those who are not holy. Justification is necessary to give us a Right unto the Enjoyment of GOD, and Communion with him. Sanctification is necessary to make us meet for the actual Enjoyment of it. Again, (3.) To serve the LORD, to be holy, is the Way to perfect our Natures, and to bring them to the highest Pitch of Perfection they are capable of. This is our Wisdom and Understanding, Deut. iv. 6, and consequently our Glory and Honour to serve the LORD. Further, (4.) To serve the LORD, is the Way to be useful to others. And this is one of the Believer's great Designs, and 'tis gain'd by this; for this is profitable, both

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both for their Conviction and Conversion. Nay, and many other ways, not now to be insisted upon.

(6.) 'Tis necessary that Believers serve the LORD, in regard of the *great Provision* that the LORD has made for them under the Gospel, in order to fit them for this Service: There is an abundant Provision of Grace to enable them to serve GOD acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear. Now, upon these accounts, ye may see how necessary it is, that we serve the LORD, tho' we are not to be justified by our Service. And not a few other no less considerable Grounds of Obedience under the New Testament Dispensation, might be mentioned, were it not that we hasten to the Application, which now follows.

It now remains that we apply this Truth, and we shall, in the first Place, draw some few general Inferences for Information from the Words.

Is it so that they who engage in the Service of GOD, should do it of *Choice, resolutely and deliberately*? Then,

1. It is not so easy a Thing to engage in the Service of GOD, as some may think: To get the Will of Man that is obstinately set against GOD, brought to a Compliance with his Will in all Things, is very hard: *The carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of GOD, nor indeed can be.* And O what a mighty Difficulty is it do ye think, to do this after a deliberate View of all the Difficulties of this Service, and a Discovery of its Opposition to corrupt Nature? Such of you as think

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think it easy to engage in the Service of the LORD, are yet to begin.

2. No unregenerate Man is aright engaged in GOD's Service ; for no unregenerate Man, after a deliberate View thereof, and the Consequences of it, will engage, or can engage in it ; and therefore, Sirs, think upon it seriously, if ye be not born again, ye are not yet Servants of GOD.

3. We may draw this Conclusion from the Doctrine, that GOD has no Mind to cheat his Servants. All the Plot of Satan and Sin, is to get People engaged, before they think ; for if they think, they despair of carrying their Point: But GOD will have us deliberate. 'Tis the peculiar Glory of Man, that he is capable of considering what he doth before he do it, and that he can weigh all the Circumstances of Actions, but profane Sinners dare not do so ; they dare not go alone, and consider what were the Motives, prompting them to what they did, what way they will make their Account to GOD, what they have to expect, after this Life is done. To think of these Things, and the like, would make them mad : But the godly Man can go alone, and look to his whole Actions, and do it without Fear ; and can look to all Things past, present, and to come, without Discomposure : And then he chooseth the Service of GOD, he does it deliberately ; the LORD will have him to do so, and therefore he knows he is not circumvented.

4. We may infer, that there is a vast odds betwixt the Service of GOD, and the Service of Sin. We cannot become GOD's Servants without acting

acting like Men, acting *rationally, deliberately, and resolutely*: But on the other Hand there is none can engage, or continue in the Service of Sin, but he must lay aside the Exercise of Reason, and act like a Beast.

Did we not design Brevity, we might improve this Doctrine many other ways, than for Information, now discuss'd, *viz.* for *Trial, Reproof, Conviction* and *Caution*. But we shall wave all these, and only insist upon *Exhortation*.

Is it so, that we should not only engage in the Service of GOD, but that we should do it *deliberately, resolutely, willingly*?

Then, my Friends, we intreat, and in the Fear of the LORD *exhort* you all this Day, to *make Choice* of the LORD for your GOD and Master, and cheerfully, resolutely, and deliberately engage your selves in his Service; and, with the People of *Israel*, say, and hold by it, *We will serve the LORD*.

This Exhortation comprises the Whole of our Commission from the eternal GOD to you. If we prevail not in this, we gain nothing, nor can we do you any Service, nor can ye do us any real Kindness. If we prevail not in this, then ye are for ever ruined, and we have lost our Labour as to you, your Damnation is sure; the Gospel will aggravate your Sin, accent your Misery, and we shall be Witnesses against you; surely therefore 'tis of Moment, and worthy of serious Consideration, what ye will answer, what ye resolve to do. Instead of many Motives we might use on this Occasion, we shall answer some Questions that will readily cast up in the Mind

Minds of such among you as entertain any serious Thoughts about the Matter ; and, in the Answers to them, we shall couch Motives sufficient, if the LORD breathe upon them, to persuade the most obstinate Enemies ; and if the LORD breathe not, nothing will be able to effectuate this.

There are Six Questions will readily employ the Thoughts of such as are in earnest about this Matter.

1. Who is the LORD, that we should serve him ?
2. Will he accept of Service at our Hand ?
3. Upon what Terms will he admit of us ?
4. What Work will he employ us in ?
5. Whom shall we be joyn'd withal ?
6. What Wages will he allow ?

These are the most material Concerns of one that means to list himself a Servant ; if he get a satisfying Answer upon all these Heads, he must engage. Now of each of these in Order ; and

1. Some of you will think, *Who is the LORD, that we should serve him ?* We know him not, and we would fain be some way acquaint with him before we engage, at least we would know who he is.

For Answer to this, we say, 'Tis very reasonable that ye know him, to whom ye submit yourselves, before ye do it ; and would to GOD this Method had been still followed by you, and then I am sure Satan had not this Day had so many Servants, nor *Christ* so many Enemies. We cannot pretend to tell what GOD is ; for
none

none can search out the Almighty to Perfection: But only we shall tell you, he has all the Qualifications of a Master, that a Servant that's wife could wish.

1. He is *great*, whom we call you to serve. Most Kings on Earth are but Slaves, and to serve most of them, is but to serve them who are Slaves to the basest of Lusts: But *the LORD is a great GOD, and a great King; even the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the high and only Potentate, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth.* None may compare with him for the Excellency of his Person. Thus saith the LORD, *Isa. xlv. 8. Is there a GOD besides me? yea, there is no GOD, I know not any.* None is equal to him in the Magnificence of his Habitation. *The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool, saith the LORD, Isa. lxvi.*

2. None equal to him in *Wisdom*; he is the *only wise GOD.* And as for *Power*, who can compare? For *what pleas'd the LORD, that hath he done, in Heaven and in Earth, and in all high Places.* And, in a Word, he is the *only Master*, and all are his Servants.

3. As he is great and honourable, so he is *good.* *The LORD is good and upright, Psal. xxv. 8.* and in other Places of Scripture innumerable. The Goodness that a Servant would desire in a Master, lies in Three Things, and they are all eminently in *GOD*; he is peerless in them all. (1.) He is a good Master, that puts his Servants upon no Work, but what is suitable and reasonable. (2.) Who bestows upon them, when careful, vast Largeesses, or great Proofs of his Bounty; and (3.) who is indulgent, compassionate, and

and merciful to the Failings of his Servants, when they do not willingly commit Faults, nor obstinately persist in them. And in all these Three Respects the LORD is matchless.

That his Work is easy, we shall afterwards shew at more Length; at present it is enough to tell, that he who cannot lie or mistake has told us, that *his Yoke is easy, and his Burden light.* And who knows not his Bounty? who feels not the Effects of it? His Bounty is great above the Heavens, and all share largely in it; for whatever there is of Goodness and of Mercy in the lot of any, that is the Fruit of his Bounty. But, besides the common Effects of it, he has particular Favours he bestows upon such as are eminently faithful. Look what Marks of his respect, and what glorious Tokens of his Bounty, *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David* and the rest, got, and that both in Spirituals and Temporals: Nor is his Mercy less to them that fear him, because of their Infirmities. Tho' he has taken all imaginable Care to caution his people against Sin, yet he will not narrowly mark Iniquity with them, nor enter into Judgment. *Little Children, these Things write I to you, that ye sin not: But if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,* 1 John ii. 1. The Covenant of Grace is not behind with the Covenant of Works, in forbidding Sin, and providing against it; the Whole of it was reveal'd, preach'd and writ, that we sin not: But this is the peculiar Glory of the Gospel, that, while the Law leaves Sinners sinking under the Curse, the Go-

spel sends and relieves them, and shews, that there is an *Advocate with the Father.*

3. The LORD is a *faithful* GOD; what Bargain he makes, he will keep. Has he promised you a great Reward? Ye may depend upon it. *He is not a Man that he should lie; or the Son of Man that he should repent.* If he make himself known to you by the Name of GOD *Almighty*, as he did to *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, see *Exod. vi.* to make them believe that what he promis'd he was able to perform, I assure you, he will not fail to make himself known to you also, as *Yehovah* GOD, that gives a Being to his Promises as he did to *Moses*, when he call'd him to see the Accomplishment of the Promises made to *Abraham*, in the Deliverance of his People out of *Egypt*. But, being satisfied that the Master is worthy beyond Compare,

II. Question will follow, *Will he accept of us for Servants?* A Question truly not impertinent after the former Answer; for 'tis no Wonder tho' any that knows GOD, or knows himself doubt whether he shall be admitted a Servant of the LORD: And they that never saw any Difficulty here, we fear not to tell them, that they serve an ill Master to this very Day, even the God of this World, *the Spirit that works in the Children of Disobedience.* But to the Question we say

I. The LORD has taken some Servants, and own'd them as such, even out of the Race of fallen Man. We hear him speak of his Servant *Abraham*, his Servant *Moses*, and *David*; and that's Encouragement to thee: Men they were

sinful

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sinful Men they were, and even the Father of the Faithful, *Abraham*, was an Idolater:

2. The LORD wants neither *Work* nor *Wages* for you: The Work he gives his Servants is even to shew forth his Glory; and this is enough to employ innumerable Millions more than have any Being. And hence it is, that his Servants many Times find the Work too great for them, and therefore call in all the Creatures to praise the LORD. So we find the Psalmist calling upon Fire, Hail, Snow, Vapours, &c. to praise the LORD, *Psal. cxlviii.* and he concludes the Book of *Psalms* thus, *Let every Thing that hath Breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD, Psal. cl. 6.* Nor is there Scarcity of Wages: As he has Work for you, so his Treasures are inexhaustible; there is no Want of any good Thing to them that fear him, for in him dwells all Fulness.

3. We have this more to say for your Encouragement, He will not cast at or reject you because ye are Sinners. Hear what such an one, a Sinner, a great Sinner, has to speak to this Purpose, *1 Tim. i. 12.* *I thank Christ Jesus our LORD, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry; who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious. See a Sinner made a Servant, and one of the first Rank made a prime Minister.*

4. We have this further to answer, He calls you to his Service; be then of good Courage, arise, for the Master calls thee. *Matth. xi. 29.* *Take my Yoke upon you,* says our Lord; there's an Invitation The Encouragement follows, *And*

ye shall find Rest to your Souls: And the Reason is subjoyn'd, For my Toke is easy, and my Burden light.

III. Ye may next enquire, *Upon what Terms* I see he will admit, but, may be, the Terms are too high. Nay, this shall not hinder, if ye have a Mind; for there is nothing more engaging and reasonable than they are. And I shall shortly lay before you these Six Particulars, and the Terms whereon he will admit you. And

First. Ye must renounce your old Masters. Ye cannot serve Two Masters; and therefore, if ye choose the LORD, ye must abandon the God whom your Fathers served on the other Side the Flood, and the Gods of the *Canaanites*, among whom ye dwell, *that is*, in plain Terms, ye must not serve Satan, ye must not serve divers Lusts, ye must not serve the World, ye must not serve Men; all other Masters you must forsake for *ye cannot serve GOD and Mammon.* And surely this is no hard Condition, but what every Servant must lay his Account with; and none have Reason to do it with so much Cheerfulness, as they who quit Sin.

2dly. Ye must be reconciled to him upon the Gospel Terms. A Master will not admit his Enemy to his Family as a Servant; who would keep in his House one that has a form'd Design to ruine him? Reasonable it is then to the highest Degree, that, before ye be admitted to the Family, ye lay down the Enmity that your Hearts are naturally full of against God, and be reconciled upon the Terms prescribed in the Gospel, which are comprised by the Apostle to the

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Philippians in Two Words, *Having no Confidence in the Flesh*, and *rejoycing in Christ Jesus*; which are indeed equivalent to other Two Words made use of by our LORD, *Deny himself*, and *follow me*. If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and follow me. For what he adds about taking up the Cross, is included in the latter Word, *follow me*. And of the same Force are the first Two Words mentioned *Phil. iii. 3.* *We are the Circumcision, which worship GOD in the spirit, rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh*. Here shortly are the Gospel terms as to Acceptance with GOD, and Justification before him; there must be no Confidence in the Flesh, no Expectation thence. But what that, *the Flesh*, will ye say, on which we are not to rest, in which we are to have no Confidence? I will tell you some Things call'd so by the Apostle, in the following Verses of that Epistle to the *Philippians*.

(1.) He calls *Church Privileges* so, external Privileges. *Circumcised the Eighth Day*; that is to say, 'tis not enough that a Man was baptized, that he got his Communion, that he is a Hearer of Preachings, and the like.

(2.) *Church Membership*. *Of the Stock of Israel*. A Man may be a Christian, and sprung of godly progenitors, and go to Ruin. There are many who may cry, *Father Abraham*, may be of his seed, and yet go to the Pit themselves, for all that. Again

(3.) 'Tis not enough to be a *Member* of the best Church on Earth: This is *Flesh* also. *Paul* was not of one of the Tribes that degenerate; but

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of the *Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews*. A Man may not only be a Christian, but a Protestant, not only a Protestant, but a Presbyterian ; but if he lean to either, he is no Servant of GOD, were he in Principle never stanch to both, 'tis Flesh, and must not be trusted to.

(4.) To be of the *strictest Party* of the pure Church, is not to be trusted to ; 'tis not enough that ye are one of the strictest amongst the Presbyterians, even one whom the World accounts Puritan. *Paul* was of the purest Church then on Earth, and one of the purest and strictest Party concerning the Law a Pharisee.

(5.) He not only was of the strictest Party but he excelled most of them, concerning Zeal persecuting the Church. 'Tis not enough to be really of the strictest Party, and even to outrun most of the strictest in Duty.

(6.) He was not one that was concerned only for Religion, and the Honour of his Profession, but he was blameless concerning the Righteousness of the Law. His Religion led him to respect all GOD's Commands ; and his Practice came so near to his Principles, that no Body could lay any Thing to his Charge ; great Attainments, but he counts them all Flesh, as they are so, upon a triple Account : They are Things, most of them perform'd by Man who is Flesh ; they are tainted all of them with Sin which is the Work of the Flesh ; they are done in a Subserviency to a carnal Design, opposite to the spiritual Design of the Gospel : So that *Flesh* is to be understood whatever is done

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by Man, or whatever is tainted with Corruption, and that even after, as well as before Conversion; for the Apostle excludes from any Share in his Dependence for Justification, even Attainments after Conversion, while he says, *What Things were Gain to me*, that is, while a Pharisee, *those I counted Loss for Christ*; and then he subjoins, *Yea doubtless, and I count (all Things) but Loss.* The first Expression, *What Things were Gain*, was too narrow, because it comprehends only what he had before; and therefore he adds this more comprehensive one to supply that, *all Things*; and that's the same with *his own Righteousness*, which he would not be found in, in the following *Verses*. In one Word, to have no Confidence in the Flesh, is to trust in nothing that can be call'd our own, because done by us, that can be called Flesh, as tainted with Sin, and done by sinful Man. 'Tis not that we are not to prize Church Privileges, nay, certainly 'tis a great Advantage, to partake of Ordinances, to be of the purest Church, and the strictest Party, and the most zealous of that Party, and to be blameless, to be, as we said, a Presbyterian, and the strictest, is Duty, and our Honour too: But yet we are to have no Confidence in this; but we are to *rejoyce in Christ Jesus*. If Conscience challenge, we are to flee to the *Blood of Christ*, and sprinkle Conscience by that. If we be carried to the Bar of GOD, and there accused: All that's laid to our Charge *Christ* must answer for it. If the Law require perfect Obedience, *Christ* has fulfilled all Righteousness, and is made of *GOD Righteousness to them that believe*, and

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this is our Joy. If Conscience accuse and lay a great Charge against us,^r *Christ* has died, and this is our Joy. If any be so bold as to condemn the Believer, GOD has justified him, while he raised *Christ* from the Dead, as being fully satisfied with what he paid on the account of Sinners. And, in a Word, wherever we are straitned, there is still found Ground of Sorrow in our selves, but Joy in the *Lord Christ*, in whom believing we rejoyce with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. Now if ye mean to serve the LORD, ye must upon the said Terms be reconciled to him; ye must have no Confidence in the Flesh; ye must rejoyce in *Christ Jesus*.

3. He will admit you to be his Servants upon these Terms, that ye comply with all his Commands. Ye must take up his Cross, hate Father and Mother, (*that is*, reject them with Disdain, when they come in Competition with him.) Ye must cut off the right Hand, pluck out the right Eye. But ye will say, this is hard. I answer, No Master will admit a Servant, but such as will obey him, and that these Things are not really hard, is plain, if we consider, (1.) That all these Things he will have us to part with, are prejudicial to us: If we must hate Father and Mother, 'tis only when they come in betwixt *Christ* and us; and we are bid cut off the right Hand, pluck out the right Eye, when they offend, and offend so, that we must part with Heaven, if we keep them. (2.) We are only bid do these Things, when the very doing of that which seems prejudicial to us, turns hugely to our Advantage; for if we part with
any

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any Thing for *Christ*, we are to expect a vast Increase, even to an *hundred-fold in this Life*, and *Life eternal* after it. And further, this will appear both reasonable and easy, if we consider the 4th Condition on which God will admit us to serve him, and that is, *that we do his Work upon his own Expence*. If we go in God's Way, we must go in the Strength of the LORD. If we need, we must come boldly to the Throne of Grace for Grace; and, in a Word, if we mean to serve him acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear, we must have Grace to do it, *Heb. xii. 28.* Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have Grace whereby we may serve GOD acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear. We must do all in the Name of *Christ*, and that is, in his Strength; for the Apostle elsewhere tells us, *That he could do all Things through Christ strengthening him.* And *Christ* tells also his Disciples, that they can do nothing without him; and sure I am, this is a very fair Condition, for it makes the hardest Work easy; 'tis all one to call a Man with his present Strength to a Work easy to him, or to call him to a Work far above it, and increase his Strength in Proportion to his Work. And thus it is in this Case, the Strength of GOD's People is still kept equal to, if not above their Work.

5. He will admit you to his Service, but ye must wear his *Livery*, and that in general is *Holiness*; for *Holiness becomes the LORD's House for ever*; but more particularly *Humility*. We are bid be clothed with *Humility*, 1 *Pet. v. 5.* The Seraphs have Wings to cover their Feet and their

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their Face, *that is*, a Clothing of Humility in a Sense of GOD's Glory, and their own Imperfection, and we must wear the same Garb, we must not glory in our selves, or our Ornaments, but *let him that glories glory only in the LORD.*

6. He will admit you to his Service; but then ye must serve him *for ever.* He will have his Servants to be for him for ever, and not for another, and when all Things are as we would wish about his Service, sure we have Reason to say, that we love our Master, and we love his Service, and we will not part, but every one of us say, *I and my Seed, I and my House, and all that will take my Advice, shall serve the LORD for ever.* Upon these Terms the LORD will accept you.

IV. Will ye say, *What Work will he set us to?* We cannot tell you all the Particulars; and such as are engaging in Service do not expect this; but I will tell you, all that ye can desire about it.

1. It is *easy* Work, in that forecited *Matth. xi.* and *29. Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls. For my Yoke is easy, and my Burden light.* The Service of Sin is Labour, and Toil, and a heavy Load; so in the *28 Ver. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* The Service of *Christ* is easie, and in it his People find Rest; a Work that's a Rest must be very sweet, and such is the LORD's Work. Would GOD we could make you understand that sweet Repose and blessed Rest there is in the Service of GOD! O how engaging would it be!

2. 'Tis

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2. 'Tis a *pleasant Work*. *Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths Peace*, Prov. iii. 17. and in keeping GOD's Commands, as well as for keeping them, there is great Reward, *Psal. xix. 11.*

3. 'Tis *honourable*. All the Works that the LORD commands, as well as these which he does, are honourable and glorious, *Psal. cxi. 3.*

4. 'Tis *profitable*. Godliness is truly great Gain; 'tis profitable for all Things, it has the Promise of the Life that now is, and that which is to come. If he call us to any Piece of Service, all the Profit comes still to our Account. If he call us to suffer, *then our light Afflictions that are but for a Moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17: And, in a Word, the Man that is righteous is profitable to himself, Job xxii. 2. But.

V. *Whom shall we have with us in this Work?* This is a very considerable Point, and of great Concern, because Servants are not alone in the Work, and very much of their Comfort depends upon their Fellow-servants. Now as to this, all is encouraging. For

1. The glorious *Mediator* is not ashamed to serve the LORD. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth*, Isa. xlii. 1.

2. *Angels* joyn in serving the LORD; hence the Angel took Occasion to prevent *John's* worshipping of him, Rev. xix. 10. *See thou do it not: I am thy Fellow-servant and of thy Brethren that have the Testimony of Jesus.*

3. The

3. The *Saints*, the excellent Ones of the Earth, are joyned in this Work. All the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven : So that we see, as the Work is pleasing, so the Society is very engaging.

VI. But if ye say, *What Reward may we look for?* I answer, tho' there were no Reward, what is said is enough : But yet we say,

1. There is a Reward. *Psal. xix. 11. And he that comes to GOD must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek im, Heb. xi. 6.*

2. This is a sure Reward. *Tit. i. 2. In hope of eternal Life, which GOD that cannot lie promised before the World was.*

3. 'Tis a durable Reward, 'tis eternal, and we receive a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, who serve GOD acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear, *Heb. xii. and 28.*

4. So great a Reward it is, that *Eye has not seen, Ear has not heard, it has not entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, 1 Cor. ii. 9. In keeping them there is great Reward, Psal. xix. 11.* Upon the whole we conclude, that whatever ye can desire, ye have here for your Encouragement, A Master great, good and faithful; sufficient Security of Acceptance, the Terms reasonable, the Work desirable, the Company incomparable, and the Reward great and inviting.

But may some say, *We fear the Preciseness of the Way, ye oblige us to an intolerable Strictness and Rigorousness in our Walk.* We answer,

I. The

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1. The Way of GOD is indeed strict, and we can make no Allowance for you to indulge any Lust, not so much as to bow in the House of Rimmon.

2. If this affright you, truly we must say, that all is not right, the Heart is not changed; for when once this is done, the Difficulty is over here. But

O then, I fear, says the Soul, that I shall not get a perverse Heart kept in this sweet Way, which is indeed a Way of Peace and Pleasantness. And therefore,

3. Ye must look to GOD, that he may take away the Heart of Stone, give you a Heart to fear him; for there's a Necessity for it, that the Tree be good, and then the Fruit will be so, and never till then. But,

4. It may be, the Strictness you fear is not real but imaginary; as

(1.) It may be, ye imagine; it will not allow you to be joyful: But this is a fond vain Delusion. Religion gives a Man the most solid Ground of Joy; it gives him Allowance to rejoyce, it directs how to make Joy run in the right Channel, which makes it double, and then it superadds a Command, *Rejoyce in the LORD always; And again, I say, rejoyce, Phil. iv. 4.*

(2.) It may be, ye think, it will not allow you the Use of lawful Comforts; but this is a vast Mistake: It will not allow you to abuse them; but it bids you use them. *Eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart, for GOD now accepteth thy Works,* says the wise Man, *Eccles. ix. 7.*

(3.) You

(3.) You suspect it will not allow you to be civil, and well bred. This is a shameless Mistake : True Religion makes Men the most pleasant Company in the World ; it makes them gentle, meek, affable, not soon angry, loth to give Offence, careful to please all Men in all Things lawful, fills their Heart with Love, and makes them edifying in their Discourse. But again, may ye say, "I will never be able for this Service, 'tis too great a Work for me." I answer,

1. 'Tis truly said, ye can do nothing. *Without me*, says Christ, *ye can do nothing*; John xv. 5. Ay but,

2. 'Tis said to no Purpose, unless ye say more, *viz.* That the LORD cannot make you able ; if ye be willing, the LORD will make you able.

3. GOD is able to strengthen you with all Might according to the glorious Working of his mighty Power, whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself, to perfect Strength in Weakness, and to make the weak as *David*, and *David* as an Angel of GOD.

Now, upon the Whole, to reassume my Exhortation, My Friends, in the Bowels of our Lord *Jesus*, we obtest you this Day, comply with our Exhortation, *Serve the LORD, and choose him this Day* ; and if not, tell me. All things are fair, the Service, the Master, the Terms, the Reward ; and if ye have a Mind to serve, there is nothing can come in your Offer like this. This is what we seek, GOD is our Witness, 'tis not yours but you. Through his Grace were we sure to carry this, we would have it at any Rate; and

and nothing will please but this. And now, if ye refuse, we take GOD to Record against you, that ye have had a fair Offer, and have sit it.

Thus far for the *first Doctrine.*

We come now to the Second, which you may take thus, to be somewhat more clear than in the first Proposal of it.

Doct. Such as have any true and sincere Regard unto the LORD, and his Service, will make their own Religion, or personal Religion, their first and main Care. But as for me, &c. first me, and then my House.

I say, they will make it their first Care, they will begin with it. Before they look what others are doing, they will first observe how all is with themselves. Again, they will make it their main Care. They will be concern'd mainly, and most deeply, that they themselves be well stat-ed with respect unto the LORD, and his Service : But we do not say, that they will make it their *only* Concern. Nay, they will be deeply concern'd with the State of their Families, and with the State of the Church ; but they will begin here at home, and look how they in their own Service are stat-ed. We say, they will make their own Religion, or personal Religion, their first and main Care. When we speak of their own Service, or personal Religion, we call it so to distinguish it from Family Religion, and from the yet more publick Service of GOD in our Church Assemblies. We shall not spend Time in
prov-

proving this Truth. What we offer when we come to the Reasons of the Doctrine, will sufficiently confirm it. Now then, in discoursing this Truth, we shall shortly

I. Tell you what it is in their own Religion, or in their own Serving of the LORD; that such as have a sincere Regard unto him and his Service, are *first* and *mainly* concerned about.

II. We shall offer you some Reasons of the Doctrine, and shew you *why* they are *first* and *mainly* concern'd about their own Religion.

We begin with the

1st. And among other Things, such as are truly sincere, and have any real Concern for the LORD and his Service, they will be deeply concern'd.

1. About the *Reality* of their Engagement in the LORD's Service : A Question it will be that will ly very near, and be much upon the Heart of every one who is truly in earnest in this Matter, Am I yet entred in the LORD's Service ? Have I accepted him upon his own Terms, as my *Lord* and *Master* ? Have I yet felt that powerful Influence of the holy Ghost, without which none can in Sincerity say, *that Jesus is the LORD*, 1 Cor. 12. 3.

This is the Foundation of all, for if we be not in very deed his Servants, in vain look we for his Servants Allowance, their Acceptance in, or their Reward for their Work. This, I say, is the Foundation, and therefore the wise Builder he will lay it *surely*, he will dig deep, Luke vi. 48. *that is*, he will use his best and most vigorous Endeavours to remove and take out of the Way

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Way the Rubbish, that intervenes betwixt him and the Rock; and he will be sure to see it, and see that his Foundation be laid exactly on the Rock. This is the first and great Concern of a sincere Soul, that they be not deceiving themselves, but that they be really engaged in the LORD's Service.

2. Sincere Souls will be deeply concerned about the *Soundness of their Hearts* in the Way of the LORD. No Heart can be sound in the Way of the LORD that is not renewed; and therefore this will be the Care of every one who has any real Regard unto the LORD, or his Service, that they have a Heart to fear and serve the LORD, according as the LORD has promised unto his People, *Ezek. xi. 19, 20.* And which we find the Saints earnestly praying for, as being under the greatest Concern to have it, *Psal. cxix. 80. Let, says the godly Psalmist, my Heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed.* And no wonder tho' they be brought under a deep Concern as to this, since the LORD, who searches the Heart, hath frequently misd and quarrelled the Want of this, under the fairest Pretences, nay, and the most sincere Engagements; I say, sincere as to any Thing discerned, either by the Persons themselves or On-lookers, as we find *Deut. v. 27, 29.* The People in the *27th Ver.* engage fairly to serve the LORD: And we have no Reason to doubt their being so far ingenuous, that they really meant what they said. Say they to *Moses, Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our GOD shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our GOD shall*

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Speak

Speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it. A fair Engagement! But ah, there is a lamentable Want! A sound Heart is wanting, and that will spoil all. This, I verily believe, they understood not. *Moses scarce understood; ay, but GOD misses it, Ver. 29. They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a Heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their Children for ever.* Some of you think, and some of you will not stand to say it, whatever Faults be in their Practice, yet, blessed be GOD, ye have good Hearts to GOD. O hellish Delusion! He that thinks his Heart is good, is blindfolded by the Devil, and has a Heart no better than the Devil's; for the Heart, by the Testimony of GOD, is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, *Jer. xvii. 9.*

3. Such as have any Thing of a real Regard unto the LORD's Service, they will be mightily concern'd about the *Singleness of their Eye.* Of how great Moment this is our LORD tells us, *Matth. vi. 22, 23.* Our LORD in the preceding Part of the *Chapter* had been directing them to whom he preach'd, as to the Ends they should have: He tells them, that Self should not be their End in their Prayers and Fastings; and their End should not be to amass earthly Treasure and Riches, but that it should be GOD's Glory, and the Enjoyment of him, which is heavenly Treasure indeed; and here he teaches the Importance of being right as to the End. *First* plainly, *Ver. 21.* And *Secondly*, by this Simili-

rude

rule, *Ver. 22.* wherein he compares the main End, or the Soul's Intention, unto the Eye of the Body, and shews that the Direction of the whole Life, and Rectitude of all the Actions of Life, depend upon the Sincerity and Rectitude of the End, as the Direction of the whole Body doth upon the Sincerity and Singleness, and Clearness of the bodily Eye. No wonder then, that such as are in earnest about the Service of the LORD, be concerned about this, since the Whole depends upon it. A squint Look as to the End will quite spoil, and render altogether useless, the most fair and specious Performances. *Take heed,* says blessed *Jesus*, in the first *Verse* of this same *Chapter*, *that ye do not your Alms before Men, to be seen of them*; otherwise ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven. Many of you multiply Duties, but, GOD knows, few look to their own Ends and Aim in Duties. But take heed; ye see, a squint Look to the Applause of Men, will make all to no Purpose.

4. Sincere Souls will make it their first and great Care, that, in their serving of the LORD, they have a *safe Rule*, as well as a single Eye. Much Labour may be lost to no Purpose, if this be not looked to. And hence it is, we find the Saints in Scripture mightily concerned about this, and looking, and that deservedly, on the Word as a *Light unto their Feet*, and a *Lamp unto their Paths*; and hence are they most earnest for Instruction in the Word, as the only sure and safe Rule, directing us how we should serve the LORD. How earnestly and how frequently does the Psalmist press this Desire, in that cxix:

Psalm throughout? wherein we have the mighty Concern of the Psalmist, about the Rule, clearly evidenced; and no wonder, since the LORD may justly send us both for our Sustenance in working, and our Reward for it when it is done, to those who prescribed us our Work; for surely, to serve the LORD, is to do whatever he commands us. We may not add unto the Word which he commands us; from this we are bound up by an expresse Prohibition, *Deut.* iv. 2.

5. Such as are indeed sincere, will be, in the first Place, and principally, concerned about the *Diligence of their Hand* in the Work of the LORD. What our Hand finds to do, we are to do it with our Might; and he is cursed with a Curse that doth the Work of the LORD slothfully. Much therefore is it upon his Soul to evite, and how he may evite that Curse, *Jer.* xlviii. 10. *Cursed be he that doth the Work of the LORD deceitfully, or negligently*, as the Word is rendred in the Margin of some of our Bibles.

6. To add no more, they will be much concern'd about their *Acceptance*, and their *pleasing him who hath called them to his Service*. If GOD accept, then all is well with them; and if he reject, then nothing can compensate the Loss they have by his hiding: And therefore they lay aside all Intanglements, that they may please him who hath chosen them to be his Soldiers and Servants, *2 Tim.* ii. 4. Thus have we perform'd what we promised in the first Place, and have shewed you what it is in their own Service of GOD, or in their personal Religion, that

gets the first and chief Room in the Care and Concern of the LORD's People; and it is the *Reality* of their Engagement, the *Soundness* of their Heart, the *Singleness* of their Eye, the *Diligence* of their Hand, the *Safety* of their Rule, and finally, their *Acceptance* in it. Before they look to other Things, they first look to this, and this is first in their Thoughts and Concern. We are now

II. To shew the *Rise* of this Concern, and to tell you *why* such as have any sincere Regard unto the LORD or his Service, make their own Religion their first and main Concern. Now of this we may take the following Reasons.

1. They will do it, because the *Command* of GOD has a first and *principal Respect* unto our own Religion, personal Religion. The Commands are directed to particular Persons, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me; Thou shalt not make graven Images; Remember thou the Sabbath-day.* And not only so, but their first Look is to what concerns these particular Persons immediately: It first binds thee as to thine own Practice, and then calls thee to regard it with respect to others; *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven Images; and first Thou art to remember the Sabbath,* and then to look that thy *Servant* and *Stranger* do so. We must begin at Home, cast out the Beam out of our own Eye, before we look to the Mote in our Neighbour's.

2. Such as are sincere, will look first and mainly to their own Religion, because it is *doubly important*, important in itself, and important because without it we are not in a Capacity to

serve the LORD, either in our Families, or in the Publick. If the Tree be not made good, none of the Fruit can be good. If we be not really the LORD's Servants, if our Hearts be not sound, our Eye single, and our Hand diligent in our own personal and private Work, Walk and Way, 'tis utterly impossible we should be so in the more publick Duties of Religion.

3. They will be, and are first and principally concern'd about their own Religion, because a due Concern about our own Religion is, if not the *Spring*, yet one of the *principal Inducements* unto, and effectual Means for engaging to Vigour and Diligence in the other more publick Duties of Religion; yea, so necessary is the Connection betwixt Diligence in this and in the other, that publick Religion rises and falls, ebbs and flows, abates and increases, according as our personal Religion rises or falls. When Saints are in a good Case, *Zion* will be much upon their Hearts.

4. The truly sincere will make their own Religion their first and main Concern, because it lies most within their *own Reach*. We cannot get our Families, Congregations, and far less Churches, as we would have them; but what we may through Grace reach, that we are obliged not to want. Tho' *Joshua* cannot get all *Israel* engaged in the Service of the LORD, yet *himself* he may; and therefore, what his Hand finds to do, what he may be able through Grace to go through, is that he is engaged to do, and to do it with his Might, *Eccles. ix. 10.*

5. Sincere Souls will make their own Religion their first Concern, because, upon their Success in this, they have the *greatest Venture*. *David*, tho' his House be not so with GOD, if he himself be right, may have Peace. Ministers, who have been faithful, may, through Grace, have Peace, tho' *Israel* be not gathered. But there is an indispensable Necessity that we our selves be personally religious; *without Holiness no Man shall see the LORD*, Heb. xii. 14.

6. I may add, sincere Souls will begin with, and lay out their main Concern about personal Religion, because the *Footsteps of the Flock* lead this Way. And we are bid, when in Search after the LORD, go our ways out by the Footsteps of the Flock: Now we may see others who have gone before, and who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises, taking this Way. So we find *Joshua* doth, so we find *David* resolved to do, *Psal.* ci. 2. where first he resolves upon a *perfect Heart*, and then a *perfect Way*, and then to go to what was more publick. And thus much for the doctrinal Part.

We come now to make some Application.

I. Use. Of Information.

Is it so, that such as have any sincere Regard to the Service of the LORD, begin at their own Religion? Then

1. We may conclude it a dangerous perverting of the Order enjoyn'd by the LORD, and followed by his People, to *begin* with a Concern about the Publick. Some there are, and not a

few there have been, who have lived either profanely, or at best in an Estrangement from the Power of Religion, who all of a sudden, either from openly profane, careless *Gallio's*, or dead and lazy Formalists, turn mighty Zealots, and, *Jehu*-like, outrun others in a mighty Concern for the Publick, taxing all that's amiss severely: But none knew how they came by it, they were never exercised about their own Souls. This is a perverse Method, and Satan is here, tho' clothed as an Angel of Light. And this is exceedingly dangerous,

First. To the *Person himself*; because (1.) It mightily strengthens him in a proud and vain Conceit of himself, while he sees not what is at home, but only sees himself abroad, where he runs before others: And surely Growth in Pride is Growth in all Sin. GOD gives Grace to the Humble; and if so, sure I am, the Proud advance in Gracelessness, and Sin gathers Strength. Again (2.) 'Tis dangerous to the Persons, because this runs them commonly to such Heights, that they can neither go forward, nor stand the Ground they come to; and therefore they must fall, and some of them fall into utter Ruin, make Shipwrack of Faith and of a good Conscience, and are lost for ever.

Secondly. 'Tis dangerous to the *Cause* they espouse: For (1.) they take wrong Means; and the more we tamper with improper Means, still the worse, and the further we are from our End. (2) Their End is not right laid, their Views not single; and this, with the wrong Steps they take in the Way, is found really to do Religion more

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Diservice, than ever their Forwardness did it Service.

Thirdly. 'Tis dangerous to those who *embark with them* in the same Work: For (1.) it sets them off from the true Way of reaching the most excellent Aims. And (2.) it lays them open to a Hazard of Apostacy, and falling, when their Leaders fall. Beware therefore of perverting the LORD's Order.

2. We may draw this Conclusion from the Doctrine, That all Concern about the *Publick*, that takes us off from a Concern about our own Souls, in the first and principal Place, is dangerous, and to be suspected. 'Tis dangerous to spend all our Time, and Talk, and Thoughts about others, while we are careless about our selves.

3. 'Tis a dangerous and terrible Issue of Exercise about our own Souls, to lose it quite, before any real Outgate be got in the LORD's ordinary Way, in a great deal, a Flood of Concern about the Publick: And this is the Issue of some Exercises at this Time. Some are for a while somewhat concerned about their own Souls; but all of a sudden this wears off, we cannot tell how, and presently there is nothing but Zeal about the Publick. We are obliged to speak of this, upon a double account, *First.* To prevent the Offence, and guard against the Evil that the Falls of such Persons may do and give to such as are less established in the LORD's Way; and, *Secondly.* To guard People against a dangerous Mistake, which is really dangerous, because 'tis a Mistake, and a Mistake in a Matter of very high

high Concernment, and most of all because 'tis such a Mistake, so well mask'd with a white Vail, that it is hard to discern it.

4. We may draw this Conclusion, That such of you as were never concern'd about your own Religion, and that to some Purpose, whatever ye think of your selves, or whatever others may think of you, ye never struck a fair Stroke about the Publick: If ye have done any Thing there, ye have begun at the wrong End, and ye have no Reason to expect Acceptance at the LORD's Hand.

II. Use is for *Trial*.

Is it so, that such who have any sincere Regard to Religion, to GOD, or his Honour and Service, do make their own Religion their first and great Concern? then surely we are all concern'd to try, whether we do make our own Religion our first and great Concern. If we do not, then surely we are naught; and therefore 'tis of the highest Importance to us, to be satisfy'd as to this, and to be distinct in our Thoughts about it. Now, that we may some way help you here, we shall enter upon a Search for this Concern, that we may know whether really we have been under any Concern about our own Religion, *yea or no*. Now, past all Peradventure, if we be indeed concern'd about our Religion, this will be found in our *Thoughts*, in our *Affections*, in our *Words*, and in our *Actions*; and therefore in all these we shall search for it.

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1. We say, If ye be concern'd about your own Religion, then surely this Concern will appear in your *Thoughts about it.* And we shall therefore put a few serious Questions to you, with respect unto your own Thoughts. And

(1.) Have ye any Thoughts about what concerns your own Religion? Some of you, I fear, dare scarce say, that ever ye think about God or his Service, save only when ye are in the Church, hearing the Minister speak about such Things; nay, I fear, that not a few of you do scarce even then think about your own Religion. Do not many of you allow your Thoughts to rove, ye know not where; or, if ye listen to what is said, ye apply nothing of it; or if ye do, 'tis only to others? Is it not thus with many of you? Well, I assure you, ye have no Religion, nor have ye any Concern about Religion: The wicked Atheist's Character is yours, *GOD is not in all his Thoughts*, Psal. x. 4. If ye think not of Religion, of your own Religion, not only when attending Ordinances, but also at other Times, ye have no Concern about it.

(2.) Though your Thoughts be some way and sometimes employ'd about this, yet ye may have no such Concern as that which we enquire after; and therefore we pose you in the next Place, Do your Thoughts run *naturally*, and, as it were, of *their own accord* in this Channel? Some People think about their Souls, and the Concerns of their own Salvation, but never save when they are compell'd to it; but surely this speaks them not suitably concern'd about it. What a Man
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is concern'd about, his Mind runs to it, as it were, without Bidding. Ye are many of you concern'd about the Things of the World; well, if ye have a Bargain of any Moment which you're concern'd about, ye will not need to force your Thoughts toward that; nay, *Matth. vi. 21.* *Where the Treasure is, there the Heart will be,* and therefore the Thoughts will run that Way; nay, they will run over the Belly of all Impediments. Is it so about your Religion? do your Thoughts still run thither? If it be not so, then surely ye have no Concern about your own Religion. He that never thinks about his own Religion, is never poring in his Thoughts (save when driven to it) to know how Matters are with him, whether he be a Servant of GOD, or no? I fear not to say, he is none, and is not concern'd to be one.

(3.) Do your Thoughts *dwell* upon this? Is the Reality of your own Engagement in the LORD's Service, the Soundness of your Heart; Singleness of your Eye, &c. the Subject to which not only your Minds run naturally, as it were, and of its own accord, but also that which your Thoughts fix on? As our Minds do readily run to the Thoughts of that whereabout we are concern'd, so they are strongly inclined to fix there, and the Mind loves to exercise its Thoughts about that, *Isa. xxvi. 3.* The Mind or Thought is *stay'd upon GOD.* The Man that trusts in the LORD, will desire to have his Thoughts thus stay'd. Is it so with you? If it be not so in some Measure, then truly you have

Reason

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Reason to think that ye have never been in earnest concerned about your own Religion.

Object. But here, may some poor exercised Soul say, Now indeed ye have found me ; for I could never all my Days get my Thoughts fixed upon any Thing that's good ; still my Mind gets away, and is carried off sometime after one Vanity, and sometimes after another.

To such I have a few Things to offer for their Relief. (1.) Is this Straying of thy Mind thy *Burden and Grief* ? If it be, then surely it speaks thy Soul desirous of fixing here. Again (2.) Dost thou *strive* to keep thy Thoughts fixed ? dost thou endeavour to fix them, and cry to GOD to fix them ? If so, then undoubtedly thy Mind is carried away violently by some Enemy, and that is not thine own Deed. Thy Soul is desirous to fix, but something forces it off, either the Power of thy domestick Enemy, that Enemy that is in thine own Bosom, I mean Sin, or of some foreign Enemy, Satan or the World, shakes you ; and this makes nothing against you : Therefore I say, (3.) Do ye, as oft as your Mind is away, *bring it back* again, and that with Grief and Sorrow for its Departings ? If so, then surely ye have no Reason to doubt your Concern upon this account. Having thus obviate this Exception, we proceed in our Search ; and

(4.) We say, Do ye think *frequently* upon this Subject ? They who are deeply concern'd about any Thing, their Thoughts will be frequently employed about it ; so, if thou be concerned about thine own Religion, many a Thought will it cost thee. They will ever and anon look to
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the Singleness of their own Eye, the Diligence of their Hand, and the Soundness of their Heart; if they cannot get long dwelt, yet they will oft come to it, who are in good earnest in the Matter. The religious Man *meditates Day and Night in GOD's Law*, Psal. i. 2. He is ever thinking about the LORD's Testimonies, and how far he is fram'd into a Suitableness to them, or how far 'tis otherwise with him. Now, if it be not thus with you, truly ye have never been brought under any Concern about Religion to any Purpose.

(5.) Are your Thoughts about your Religion *distinct*? Some there are, who have some Thoughts about their Souls, but they cannot tell well what they mean by them, they are so confus'd: They think and think on, and, after (may be) Twenty Years thinking, they are as far from any Distinctness as before; but still they go on. Now and then they will have some Thoughts, issuing in some Work upon the Affections, full as uncertain and indistinct: Is it thus with you? But that ye may know yet more clearly what we mean by this Question, I shall break it into a few other Questions. And (1.) I say, Can ye tell what that is in your Religion that takes up your Minds and Thoughts? Many of you have (it may be) some Thoughts, but ye cannot tell about what they are employ'd. Is it about Singleness of your Eye, about the Sincerity of your Heart? or, can ye tell whereabout it is that ye employ your Thoughts? If not, truly your Concern signifies but very little, it will not stand you in much stead. Again (2.) Have ye
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any distinct End in your thinking about Religion? what design ye by thinking about it? Is it only to think, without thinking to any Purpose? Some People both think and speak about Religion, but I fear they are not aiming really at any *distinct End*. See *Psal.* xxvii. 4. And the Concern of such is but little worth: Ye think about your Religion; well, what do ye expect or propose to have by your thinking about it? Would ye know your Case, or what way to come out of it? what's the Remedy of it? or how to apply it? Aim ye at such Ends? If not, then truly all your Thoughts are to little Purpose. Once more (3.) Get ye any distinct Issue of your Thoughts? Are ye like the Door upon the Hinges? Ye think, and ye never can tell what ye have got, or what ye have done, by all your Thoughts. If this be all, then truly I cannot well tell what to think of your Thoughts; I think, I may say, ye can have but little Comfort of them.

(6.) What *Sort* of Thoughts have ye? People may have Thoughts enow, and even about Religion, and, it may be, such as do some way respect their own Religion, and yet they are not much concern'd about it, while their Minds are only busied in applauding and flattering Thoughts of their own Case: But now, is it otherwise with you? Do you apply your selves to searching and trying Thoughts? have ye many Jealousies and Suspicions of your selves? do ye often make diligent Search into your own Case? have ye many Doubts and Questionings? If your Thoughts be not in some Measure exercised

cised this way, 'tis a sad Evidence that ye are not, nor have ever been under any true Concern about your own Religion: For such Thoughts have the Saints had, who have been in earnest in the Matter; of whom we have a large Account in Scripture History, particularly *Psal.* cxxxix. 23, 24.

II. We shall search for this Concern about our own Religion, in the *Affections*. Wherever we are concerned, all our Affections will be employed about that, set upon it, or set against what is opposite to it. Now

(1.) We pose you on it: Are your Affections employ'd about your own Religion? do ye grieve that Things are wrong with your selves? do ye fear that they may be so? do ye hate what is prejudicial to your own Religion? do your Souls cleave to any Thing that may any way contribute to the bettering Things with you? Say, my Friends, is it thus with you? or is it not? I fear, I fear that many of you who can sorrow and lament bitterly, if any worldly Thing frame with, or fall out to you otherwise than you would wish, yet never all your Life long knew what it was to be griev'd indeed for Sin; or that Matters were not right with respect unto your spiritual Case. Ye have no Fears, no Joys, no Grievs, no Zeal, nor any Affections about these Things. Surely then Religion, your own Religion, is not the *one Thing* with you, your main Thing; it is not: Nay, surely you have no Concern about it. *Where the Treasure is, or any Part of it, there will the Heart be, Matth. vi. 20, 21.*

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(2.) Are your Affections frequently employed about your own Religion? have ye frequent Fears, Grievs, Joys, and other Affections from this Spring? Man, Woman, if thou be'st concern'd about thine own Religion, to have it right, thou wilt be oft looking to it; and every Look will set thy Affections to work one way or other. If thou findest thy self wrong, the Soul will stretch its Affections, like its Wings, to fly out of that Case; and if otherwise, it will, if I may so say, clasp them about what it has, to hold it fast. So *David*, when he thought upon his Ways, and found them wrong, *Psal.* cxix. 59. *He made Haste, and delayed not to turn his Feet to GOD's Testimonies.* And the Spouse, *Cant.* iii. 4. when she found the LORD in her Embraces, she held him, and would not let him go. He whose Affections are not frequently employ'd about his own Soul's Case, surely he was never concern'd about it as he ought.

(3.) *Whereabout is the Edge of thy Affections,* the Fervour and Zeal of them employ'd? If this be not about thine own Soul, thine own Religion, truly thou art not concern'd. Where there is any Thing of true Heat and Warmth, ye know that which is nearest will meet with most of it, and partake most of it. If thou hast any Affections about Religion at all, then the Heat of them, the Fervour of them will be employed about thine own Religion; if there be a Fire of Zeal against Sin, it will consume the *Beam* in thine own Eye, before it reach to the *Mote* in thy Neighbour's, *Matth.* v. 7. If it be not thus

with thee, thy Affections are not about thine own Religion.

(4.) Hast thou any *Rest*, whilst either thou seest Ground to think thy self wrong, or art at Uncertainty about thine own Religion? Canst thou live *quietly* and *easily*, while not settled as to the everlasting Concerns of thy Soul? If thou canst, thy Affections are not set on, nor art thou truly concern'd about those Things which do belong unto thy Peace. I know not what to say of some People, who have no more Assurance of Salvation than of Damnation, and yet can rest secure, and be quiet and very well content in that Case: I can assure such, that they were never aright concern'd about their own Religion. Some they doubt, and they never seek to be satisfied: May be I may be saved, sayst thou. May be thou mayst be damned, say I. What Ground hast thou to hope that thou shalt be saved? If ye will speak what is true, ye will say Truly I have none. But I have somewhat to say, as a Ground of my Conjecture: *First*. Thou deservest Damnation. *Secondly*. Thou who canst sit still quietly in that Case, thou wast never concern'd to be saved; and I knew never one get to Heaven, who laid not Salvation to Heart. *Ezek. xxxvi. 37.*

(5.) Thou hast, it may be, some Affections about thine own Religion; but when is it that they are *moved*? and *what* gives a *Rise* to them? Hast thou never these Affections, but when thou hearest a Preaching, or when thou meetest with some awakening Providence? Truly, if thou never hast any Concern about Religion, save

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when thou hast some external Cause *exciting* thee, then thy Concern about Religion is of no great Value. True Concern about Religion will turn the Soul's Eye inward, to commune with itself, and take Counsel in our own Heart, how to get what's amiss amended; and this will set Affections a work, *Psal. xiii. 2. How long shall I take Counsel in my Soul, having Sorrow in my Heart daily?* But, to go on,

III. Having search'd the *Mind* and *Affections*, we now come to enquire for this Concern in your *Words*: And if there be any Thing indeed of a real Concern upon the Soul about Religion, herein it will appear; for *out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*, *Matth. xii. 34.* Now, that we may bring this Matter to some Issue, I shall put a few Questions to you, in reference to your Words or Discourse. And

(1.) I pose you on this, Do ye ever keep up any Converse, any Discourse with *your selves*? and, if ye do, whereabouts is it? Do ye never commune with your own Hearts? If not, then surely ye do but little regard your own Interest. He that never converses with his own Heart, is not under any Concern about the State of his own Soul, and will undoubtedly be found among those who, while they are busie about many Things, do yet neglect the *one Thing necessary*. The LORD commands it, and our Souls Case requires it, that we *commune with our own Hearts*, *Psal. iv. 4. and lxxvii. 6.*

2. What Discourse have ye with the LORD? Have ye any Converse with the LORD? any Converse in Prayer, in Meditation or Ejaculation?

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If ye have none, then surely never were ye under any Concern about his Service ; and if ye have any Converse with him, if ye speak to the LORD, and this be not the Thing ye have been speaking to the LORD about, it speaks you not under any Concern : For we find Saints have been ever most concern'd about this ; and, in the Account we have of the Saints Exercise, we see clearly the most of their Words employ'd about this.

3. What Converse, what Discourse have ye, when ye meet with the *LORD's People* ? Is it what may be some way subservient to this glorious End ? Are your Words employ'd in telling what GOD has done for your Soul, or in learning what he has done for others ? *Come here, all that fear GOD, and I will tell what he has done for my Soul,* Psal. lxvi. 16.

4. What Sort of Discourse like ye best to keep up ? is it about this great Concern ? or is it about any Thing else ? Look to it, that Converse that ye like best, is like to speak what your Soul is under the greatest Concern for : If it be Converse about the World, ye are Lovers of this World ; if it be about the Faults of others, and the Publick, Pride predomines ; if it be mainly about your own Souls, it speaks somewhat of Concern about them. But now in the

IV. and last Place, We shall look to your Deeds, that we may see what it is that lieth nearest your Hearts, and whether ye be under any due Concern for Religion, and your own Religion. And here

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(1.) I would ask you, What *Work* put ye your Hands to? is it the Work of your Salvation? We are bid *work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. Now, is this the Work ye employ your selves about? or, are ye busy about other Works, while this is neglected? I fear, with most this is but little heeded: Ay, but if ye were under a true Concern about your own Religion, then (1.) There would be *much Time* employed about that which directly tends to, and, one way or other, has somewhat of an immediate Influence on your Salvation. And (2.) all your Works would be done in a *Subserviency* to this End. Now, is it so with you, or not? Do ye pray hard, and wrestle earnestly with the LORD about your Souls State? Are ye much in believing, much in mortifying Sin, holding under the Body of Sin? Is this the Work ye are busied about? Some of you, we fear, never yet thought about this Work; and as for you, tis no hard Matter to tell what your Case is, ye are yet Strangers to any real Concern about Religion.

(2.) What Work are ye *most diligent* about? what is it that ye apply your Might to? Do ye give *all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure*? 2 Pet. i. 10. or, are there not among you who in any other Business will work hard, toil more about it, but if once ye be put to work about this Matter of the highest Importance, ye presently fall dead and lifeless to such a Degree, that all is presently out of Case with you; ye are weary, before well begun, of any Work that has any near Relation to your own Salvation. If

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this be your Case, then are ye under no real Concern about your Religion.

(3.) What Work are ye most concerned to have *carried forward*, and brought to some comfortable *Period*? Can ye not be well enough pleased, if your other Business frame well with you, and go right in your Hand, tho' the Work of your Salvation ly behind? or, dare ye say, that no Attainment in Salvation-work is able to satisfie you, till you reach the Recompence of Reward? Do ye indeed forget the Things that are behind, and press forward unto this? Can nothing short of *Assurance*, as to your Calling and Election, please you? If so, it bodes well; and if otherwise, it makes a sad Discovery of Want of a suitable Regard to that which ye indeed ought to be mainly concern'd about. Surely he that can rest satisfied, tho' Salvation-work be far behind, provided other Things go well, is not under an equal Concern for Salvation, and for those Things; the other Things are certainly preferr'd by him.

Now, if ye have been using your Judgment in any Measure, ye may know whether ye be or have really been under any Concern about your own Salvation, or whether ye have made your own Religion your first and great Concern. And therefore we shall proceed to speak something, in a more particular Way, to the several Sorts of Persons of which this Assembly may consist. And here we shall speak

I. To those who are under *no real Concern* whether about their own Religion, or that of others.

II. To

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II. To those whose Religion lies *much*, or *mainly*, in a Concern about *others*, and about the *Publick*.

III. To those who are indeed under a deep and special Concern about their *own Religion*: The *Publick* they would fain have right; but their Exercise is, first, to be sure that they themselves are so, and then they contribute their Share to put Matters otherwise right.

IV. We shall apply this Truth to all, in some *Exhortations* suitable to the Scope of the Truth insisted on.

Now, of each of these we shall speak very shortly. And

I. We are to begin with those who are under no Concern about Religion; and to such we shall speak some Things, 1. For *Conviction*. 2dly. *Expostulation*. And 3dly. *Terror*.

And to follow this Order, 1. We shall speak some Things for your *Conviction*; tho' this be the Case of most of you, yet we fear few of you will take with it; and therefore, notwithstanding all that has been already said for your Conviction, we shall yet offer two or Three Words more. And

(1.) We say, Men and Women, did *Religion* ever take up your *Hearts and Heads*? Was it ever really your Exercise, to know whether ye were right or wrong? Did ye ever put it to the Trial, whether ye were Satan's Slaves, the Devil's Vassals, or the Servants of the LORD? if not, to this very Day ye are Satan's Servants, and never had any Concern about Religion.

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(2.) Did ye ever lay down this *Conclusion*, I *am lost, undone, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked*, I want Faith, I want Grace, I want GOD, want *Christ*, I have destroyed my self? If not, then ye never have been under any Concern of a right Sort.

(3.) Did ye ever *resolve* upon it, that go the World as it will, and come what will, I have no Concern like my Soul; and therefore I shall never be at Rest, or take Ease, or be quiet, until I get Matters in some Measure right betwixt the LORD and me? If ye have not been brought under some such Resolutions as this, from a Conviction that all is of no Avail to you, if ye lose your Soul; then surely to this very Day ye are perfect *Gallio's* in GOD's Matters and your own most precious Interests.

(4.) Can any Thing give thee *Content*, while thou livest altogether at Peradventures about Salvation, about *Christ*? Then yet hast thou Reason to fear, that thou never hast been concerned about that which thou canst be pleased without, I mean, *Salvation* and an *Interest* in *Christ*.

2dly. Having offered some Things by way of *Conviction*, we shall now a little *expostulate* with you. And

(1.) Can ye be, were ye ever concerned about any Thing? Did ye ever think seriously, speak seriously, or act seriously about any Thing? If not, thou art certainly a Fool, a mad Man. If thou hast, then

(2.) Man or Woman, is there any Thing equally worthy of thy Concern, as the Salvation of

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of thy Soul? What art it thou profited if thou gain a World, and lose this? And mayst not thou be happy, if thou save this, tho' thou lose a World?

(3.) Thinkest thou then to save this without Concern? Think it not: For not only must thou strive, must thou run, but every Running, and every Striving will not do the Business; and therefore thou must *so strive, and so run that ye may obtain.*

(4.) Were it not thy Wisdom to prevent that, which if once it come, cannot be remedied, I mean the Loss of thy Soul? Know, *the Soul's Redemption is precious*, and ceases for ever, *Psal. xlviii. 9.*

(5.) Canst thou, wilt thou sit as unconcernedly, when GOD is sinking thee into a Sea of Brimstone, as now thou dost, when he is threatening to do it? If not, bethink thy self in Time, ere it be too late.

(6.) Are ye not *ashamed* to be unconcerned about this, about which all others are so deeply concerned? and yet none of them have so great an Interest in the Matter as ye. The Devil is concerned, he goes about seeking whom he may destroy. Will not ye be concerned about the Preservation of that which he and all his Instruments are so much concerned to destroy?

Ministers are concerned, they preach, they pray, they sweat, they think, they toil, many a trembling Heart have they for fear of your Ruin. They spend their Time and Strength about your Salvation, while many Times they
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fear, that by this Means their own Salvation be neglected. And now whether, I pray, have ye, or they, most Concern in this Matter? They may, if they be faithful, yea, they will go to Heaven whatever come of you; are ye then mad, so far to overlook your own great Interest? GOD is concerned; can ye doubt of it, while he is held forth in the Gospel, as bleeding, dying, weeping, sweating Blood, and all to prevent your Ruin? Can ye doubt of it, while he is heard inviting, calling, intreating, promising, offering, protesting, nay, and even swearing his Concern in the Matter, *As I live, saith the LORD, I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, saith the LORD GOD, Ezek. xviii 32. and xxxiii. 11.* And what need has GOD of any of you? Can ye be profitable to him, as he that is righteous is profitable unto himself? Consider this and be ashamed, and horribly confounded, O careless unconcerned Souls!

3. We now come to speak a Word for Terror to you: Know then for certain

(1.) That Soul which ye will not be concerned to save, ye shall lose: And will any Thing make up the Loss? What will all the World profit you, while ye have lost a precious Soul, without Hope of Recovery?

(2.) That Damnation which ye were not careful to prevent, shall be your Portion; and who among you can dwell with everlasting Burnings, who among you can dwell with devouring Fires?

(3.) These Things which now ye are concerned about, and pursue with so much Eagerness,

ness, shall be your everlasting Tormentors, and what Profit will ye have of these Things, whereof then ye will be ashamed?

(4.) When all this Misery shall come upon you, there shall not be any concerned for you; when this shall come upon you, then who shall be sorrowful, or lament for you? GOD will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh. *The Righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying, Lo, this is the Man that made not GOD his Strength, but trusted in the Abundance of his Riches, and strengthened himself in his Wickedness, Psal. lii. 6, 7.* But we proceed,

II. The next Sort of Persons to whom we promised to speak, are they who are indeed under *some Concern* for Religion, but their *main Concern* seems to be about publick Matters, the Carriage of others, and Miscarriages of those who are in any publick Trust, and they relish Converse about this most of all, and spend most of their Time this way. What we are to say to those, is not to dissuade any from a due Regard to the Publick, but on design to obviate some dangerous Extremes. Now to such we say,

I. Whatever any may account of you, ye have Reason to suspect, and be jealous of your selves: We have shewed from the Word of the LORD, that where there is any Thing of a sincere Regard to the LORD's Service, it will shew itself, *First.* In a deep Concern to have, and keep Matters right at home; and since your main Concern lies another Way, truly your Religion, tho' your Pretences be never so high, or the Thoughts
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of Ministers or others never so favourable, is deservedly suspicious, and you have Reason to doubt it: And I will tell you some of the Grounds whereon. (1.) I am sure your Hearts are, as well as these of others, *deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked*, and would willingly deceive you. (2.) I am no less sure, that while you are much abroad in observing others, and little at home in self-judging, self-searching and self-condemning, they have a special Advantage for deceiving you, which they, no doubt, will not lose. (3.) Your Dislike or light Esteem of those Things which speak a spiritually healthy Constitution, with your liking to those Things that discover a vitiate spiritual Palate and Senses, gives me Ground to fear you are not right. When People love not so well to hear the sweet and plain Truths of the Gospel as continual Reflections upon publick Failings, it discovers a Spirit imbittered and rankled, and not under due Impressions of its own deep Concern in the plain Gospel Truths. *As new-born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the LORD is gracious,* 1 Pet. ii. 2. 13. When once People begin to weary of the preaching of *Christ* and him crucified, and of hearing the way of Salvation, the Means of Salvation, the Marks of Grace, and Soul-exercise, the LORD's Work and Way of translating Souls out of Darknes into his marvellous Light, and of carrying on the Work of Salvation to a blessed Period; when once, I say, this cannot be heard, and nothing is relished, but Debates, tho' about Truths, and pre-

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precious Truths of GOD, I must say, their Religion is, if not quite wanting, yet very low. (4.) I am much afraid of such, because Pride is strong in them, and is encouraged in both its Parts. It consists in low Thoughts of others, and high Thoughts of our selves: Now both these Parts of Pride are strengthned. For (*First*) What Way can be more effectual to sink others in our own Esteem, than always to pry into, discourse of, and judge them for their Faults, real, or supposed? Again, *Secondly*. What can raise us higher in our own Conceit, than to look little into our own Hearts, these filthy Sinks of Sin; to look at our selves, when, like *Jehu*, we appear very far beyond others in Zeal for the LORD, and to compare our selves with others, when we have debas'd them as low as we can? Thus is Pride fed; and where it grows strong, all Grace will languish. *GOD resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace unto the humble*, Jam. iv. 6. Much more might be added, upon the most clear Scripture Evidences: But we go on.

2. We say to such, However specious like your Services have been, you have Reason to be jealous of them, and to fear the Want of an Ingredient that will spoil all, I mean, *Singleness* as to your Aim. Many are deceived as to this Matter; and ye have Reason to be afraid. If the Tree be naught, assuredly the Fruit is so too; and what Ground ye have to suspect the former, we have hinted just now; fear therefore the latter. A squint Look to a By-end, will be a dead Flie; it will make the finest Ointment stink

stink ; and GOD knows there is Ground to fear, that there may be some such *By look*. What we might offer for clearing of this must be past by ; for our Design will not allow us to enlarge upon those Particulars.

3. We say to you, Look to your selves ; for whenever trying Times come, you will be meet Tools for the Devil to make Use of, to ruine the Church of GOD. The Church has ever suffer'd more by false Friends, and the Mistakes of the really Godly, especially when going to this Extreme, than by open Enemies ; and I will tell you several Grounds upon which I am apt to think, that ye will err and wander from the Way, and that to your own wounding, and to the wounding of the Church. (1.) Your Carriage casts you without the Reach of GOD's Promise, of guiding in such Times. 'Tis the humble, and not the self-conceited Christian that the LORD will guide. *The Meek will he guide in Judgment, the Meek will he teach his Way*, Psal. xxv.

9. (2.) You will be easily perswaded to neglect the Means of Guidance, I mean, an Attendance upon *Christ's* faithful Ministers. This Sort of People have many Prejudices against Ministers, and 'tis easy to drive them to the Height of deserting their Ministry ; and then surely they are an easy Prey to every Seducer, and to every Fancy. *Christ's* Direction to his Spouse at Noon, that is, in Times of Adversity, and when 'tis hard to know who is right, who is wrong, is to keep close by faithful Ministers. *If thou know not, O thou fairest among Women, go thy way forth by the*

Footsteps

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Footsteps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids beside the Shepherds Tents, Cant. i. 9. (3.) In that Time Offences will abound ; and if thou wilt break thy Neck upon the Faults, either of Ministers or of Christians, thou wilt not want Stumbling-blocks, and the Devil will be sure to improve them all, to nurse you up in the good Conceit thou hast entertained of thy self, and in undervaluing Thoughts of others. Many more of the like Sort we pass.

4. I shall leave you, with this one awful Warning, who have any Hankering toward this Extreme: Beware lest, while ye expect to be rewarded of the LORD for your publick Zeal and Concern, ye be damned for Want of personal Godliness. Read, consider, and tremble at that awful Beacon of the LORD's holy Jealousy in this Sort. *Many will say to me in that Day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work Iniquity,* Matth. vii. 22, 23. Here are Men far forward in publick Appearances, and yet damn'd for want of personal Godliness. For the LORD's sake remember, and fear, that ye fall not into the like Condemnation. Neglect not the Publick ; but O begin at home, and employ your first and great Care there ; and when ye go abroad, be sure ye keep within your own Sphere. But,

III. Leaving this Sort of People, I come in the next Place, to speak a Word to such as are indeed

indeed under a deep Concern, and that first and mainly about their own Souls, tho' they dare not forsake *Zion*, with *Joshua* they would have all *Israel* choose the LORD : But whatever come of this, one Thing they take Care to be sure of, that they themselves are GOD's Servants. Now, to such we have only a few Words to say.

1. Sirs, What ye have, *hold fast*. Say against this Order who will, we dare say it is GOD's, and will be own'd by him ; and if ye hold on, I dare in GOD's Name say unto you, that ye shall be helped, and honoured to stand by him, when others whose Pretences are high, will turn their Back on him : Ye shall bring forth your Fruit in its Season, as the Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, *Psal. i. 3*.

2. I say to you, Beware of such as would divert you from this Course : Hold at a Distance from such whose Conversation has any Tendency to beget Prejudices against a Gospel Ministry and Ordinances. Assuredly their Steps take hold of Death, and lead to it, pretend what they will : GOD never ordain'd his Babes to live without Milk, and some to feed them also. If once ye be prevail'd with to disgust your Food, all will quickly grow wrong with you : If you want it a while, Hunger will go off, and you will be fill'd with Wind, and will not be aware till ye just die. If ye have got any Good of Ministers and Ordinances, I say to you, hold by them, and beware of any Thing that may deprive you of the Advantage of them, or lessen your Benefit by them. Deserting Ordinances will

will entirely deprive you of the Advantage of them, and Prejudices nourished against them, will make your Advantage less.

3. Beware of spending your Time, and of such as would draw you to spend your Time, in Love-killing, and Prejudice-hatching Debates: *Only by Pride cometh Contention, but with the well advised is Wisdom,* Prov. xiii. 10.

4. For the LORD's sake make earnest of growing in Religion. What ye have happily begun, take no Rest till it come to a blessed Issue: Press forward toward the Prize of the high Calling of GOD in *Christ*. Forget the Things that are behind, and press forward. *Give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure. Work out the Work of your Salvation with Fear and Trembling, knowing that it is GOD who worketh in you to will and to do of his good Pleasure. And ye shall undoubtedly reap in due Time if ye faint not.* I now proceed

IV. To shut up the Whole, in a few Words of Exhortation to all. We had some Thoughts of branching this Exhortation out in several Parts; and we indeed justly might do so: But designing to conclude this second *Doctrine* presently, we shall wrap all up in one.

Is it so, that such as have any real Regard unto the Honour of the LORD, do make their own Religion their first and great Concern? Then, my Friends, let me in the Fear of the LORD beseech, intreat and obtest you, to be concern'd about your own Religion: Make this sure by any Means; serve ye the LORD, take others

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what Course they will ; and even begin at this
Make this your first and great Care : For,

1. This is the *Foundation* of all ; and as the Foundation is right or wrong, so it will fare with the whole Superstructure. This is the Rock, and as it is good, or evil, so will the Fruit be ; this is the Spring, and if any Thing be amiss here, all the Streams will partake in the Evil and Hurt : O therefore by any Means make all right here.

2. Make this your first and great Concern, for it will be herein, and with respect to this mainly, that ye will be tried ; all the Trials that the LORD brings on his People, do still try this, how Matters are here, whether the Foundation be right laid, and how far the Work is carried on.

3. Death and Judgment will be comfortable, or bitter, as it is right or wrong with you, in this Respect. Your Salvation and Damnation depend upon it. *He that believeth not shall be damned ; he that believeth shall be saved.* He that for his own part betakes not himself to the Lord *Jesus Christ* for Salvation, in the Gospel Method, shall assuredly be damned, come of others what will.

4. Make this your first and great Care ; for truly, the Defect of this is the Spring and true Source of that lamentable Defect of Family Religion, and of a due Concern for the Publick, which is Matter of deep Concern to all that fear the LORD this Day. What, is it any Wonder, that the Man that takes no Care of his own Soul,

be

be unconcerned about the Souls of others? How can he that is posting to the Pit himself, take Care of others, and endeavour to preserve them from running to their own Ruin? Never will any reasonable Man believe, that he who goes on in Sin himself, will, in his Station, be really zealous for repressing it in others. Unless we prevail with you to be concerned about your own Souls, we despair of getting you any way serious in reforming your Families.

5. Make this your first and great Care; for this will help you to employ your Zeal the right Way, in reforming others; it will make you first concern'd for their Souls, and to have them built upon the sure Foundation. 'Tis the Folly of some Professors to be always for debating, when they come into Conversation with Persons, that they suppose, and, it may be, not without Ground, are Strangers, nay, and Enemies to Religion; and that not so much to bring them to Acquaintance with the Power of Religion, but to be of their Judgment, in some Points of Controversy that are toss'd in the Day we live in, which I do confess are of very great Moment: But here they mistake; for they should first endeavour to bring the Man under a real Concern about his Soul; and then you have brought him one Step towards the Embracement of any Principle, or Practice, that is according to Godliness: And if ye gain not this Point, for a graceless Man, a Man that is not exercised to Godliness, 'tis of no great Consequence what his Profession be, *Papist, Prelatist, Presbyterian*, or any Thing else: For he will be true to no Profession: 'Tis

not a real Principle that holds him ; and he ready to be, upon any Temptation, a Scandal to that Way that he cleaves to. O make your own Religion your first and great Care, and this will learn you where to begin with others.

6. O make personal Religion your first and great Concern ; for alas, here it is that the main Defect is among you. We have oft complained and we have daily new Reason to complain of you, that many, at least among you, are going the broad and most patent Roads to the Pit, some in that of Ignorance of GOD, others in that of Drunkenness, some in that of abominable Oaths and swinish Lusts, and others in that of devilish Revenge, and Contentions, always leading down to Death and Destruction, and that openly I know most have long since laid down a Conclusion, that they shall have Peace, tho' they walk in the Way of their own Hearts, adding Drunkenness to Thirst, one Sin to another. But assuredly ye are deceived. *Be not deceived ; thus saith the LORD, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of GOD, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.* And the same shall be the Fate of Cursers and Swearers. *Then said he unto me, This is the Curse that goeth forth over the Face of the whole Earth : For every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this Side, according to it ; and every one that sweareth, shall be cut off as on that Side, according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of Hosts, and it shall enter into the House of the Thief, and into the House of him that sweareth* *fa 12.*

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salsty by my Name. And it shall remain in the Midst of his House, and sha'l consume it with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof, Zech. v. 3,

4. Now are there not such among you? Are there not unclean Persons, Swearers, Drunkards, and the like, among you? And ye who are such, have not ye need to be concern'd to be religious? Sure ye have none as yet. And now to bring this home to you, let me pose you upon Three Things. (1.) Do ye believe that the Words ye have heard are the Words of GOD? If not, then be gone, you have nothing to do here. If ye do; then (2.) Do ye hope to get to Heaven, when GOD has said ye shall never get there? If ye do, ye are mad, and if ye do not, ye are mad: If ye hope to get to Heaven in Spite of GOD, assuredly ye are mad; and if ye believe there is a Heaven, and yet live in that which ye know will debar you thence, ye are mad indeed. (3.) If GOD, by a Gospel Dispensation prevail not so far with you, as to make you leave the open Road to Hell, is he like to prevail with you, to bring you over to a Compliance with the Gospel Call entirely? No, no, surely no. My Friends, look in Time, be concerned in Time; for as the LORD liveth, ye are in eminent Danger, Danger greater than ye are well aware of; and whether ye will hear, or whether ye will forbear, know that if ye die, your Blood is on your own Heads; ye have got Warning. Take Warning, and make personal Religion indeed your first and great Concern.

7. O make your own Religion your first and great Care; for here many are deceived; many

have a Name to live, who are dead, and appear to be something, who yet, when weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary, will be found wanting, and have a *Tekel* writ upon them.

8. To add no more, consider seriously, how sad a Deceit in this Matter is. O terrible Deceit, to mistake Heaven, and instead of it slip into Hell! To mistake the broad Road, and think it the narrow! How terribly will the poor deluded Souls, that swell with the Hopes of Heaven and Glory, look, when, instead of falling into the Rivers of Pleasure, they shall sink like Lead in the mighty Waters of GOD's holy, just, and terrible Indignation against Sin! As ye would not meet with this terrible Disappointment, look to your selves; make sure your own Religion lay the Foundation well, and then ye may have Peace, and the LORD will establish it. Now for your Direction, I shall only offer Two or Three short Words.

1. Bring your selves to the Light, to the Standard of GOD's Word, and try your selves by that which is the true Test, the Balance of the Sanctuary, the Counsel of the LORD which shall stand.

2. Whatever Judgment the Word passes on you, tho' it read your Name amongst the black Roll of those who are doom'd to the bottomless Pit; hear it, and believe it, for assuredly the Scripture cannot be broken.

3. Cry to the LORD, that he may give his Spirit to open your Eyes, to know how Matters are with you.

4. What

4. When GOD, by his Word and Spirit, has wounded you, wait upon him for Cure, in the same Way : For 'tis thence also, you must have your Acquaintance with the blessed Physician, *Jesus Christ*, in whom alone your Help is.

Thus having finished the second *Doctrine*, I now proceed to the

Doct. 3. *Such as are sincerely religious themselves, will take Care that their Families, and all whom they can have any Influence upon, be so too : Or, shortly thus, Such as are sincere will be really careful to maintain Family Religion. But as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.* Which shews us, (1.) That GOD requires Household Religion, even, that we and our Houses serve the LORD. Now, what is not required, or commanded, cannot be Service done to the LORD. (2.) That we, and our Houses or Families, should join, or perform jointly some Part of Service to the LORD (3.) That a Master of a Family, is call'd to take Care of, and may engage some way for his House or Family, their serving the LORD.

Now, in the further prosecuting of this Point, we shall shew you,

I. *Wherein Family Religion lies.*

II. *Whence it is, that such as are sincere, are so much concern'd about it, as we here find Joshua, and others of the Saints in Scripture.*

I. Now we begin with the *First*, and shall only here observe, that Family Religion consists of Three Parts, or is comprehensive of the Three following Particulars.

I. *Family Instruction.*II. *Family Worship.*

III. *Family Government, or Order.* And about these it is, that a religious Master will be concern'd; and he that is not in some measure carefully exercised in those Three, there is Reason to fear he has no Religion. Now, we shall a little open these Three unto you, and

I. We say, that *Family Instruction* is that, which such as are sincerely religious will be careful of. Assuredly there will be nothing that will ly nearer the Heart of a conscientious Master of a Family, next to the Salvation of his own Soul, than the Salvation of his Family, his Children, and Servants; and one great Part of his Care, will undoubtedly discover it self this way, in a deep Concern, to have them accurately instructed in the Knowledge of their Duty toward GOD, their Neighbour and themselves; and, in a Word, the Whole of that Knowledge which is necessary, in order to their Walk with GOD here, and their Enjoyment of GOD hereafter. And this Part of Family Religion, we find the LORD very punctual and expresse in commanding, *Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9.* *And these Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a Sign upon thine Hand, and they shall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the Posts of thy House, and on thy Gates.* In which

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observe 1. *Personal Religion* enjoyn'd. *They shall be in thine Heart.* 2dly. *Domestick Religion.* *Thou shalt teach them diligently.* Here also we have a plain Account of this first Part of Family Religion, and a clear Command for it; we see who they are about whose Instruction we are to concern our selves, 'tis our Children, and those who are in our House, that is, Children and Servants; for under the Notion of Children, Servants are frequently comprehended, as particularly in the Fifth Command. There it is agreed by all, that under that of Parent and Child, all Relations, and particularly Master and Servant are comprehended. We see also the Manner how this Duty is to be managed, and that is *diligently.* And this is yet more particularly opened, as to the Ways and Seasons wherein we are to evidence our Diligence, and special Care of the Instruction of those under our Charge. Now two Ways we ought to manage this Piece of Family Religion. And (1.) By Precept. (2.) By our Walk. We ought to teach them diligently both Ways; we ought to inculcate, and carefully press upon them the Knowledge of the LORD; and what we thus teach them by *Word*, we ought strongly to inforce by a suitable *Walk.* Parents and Masters should be in Case to say to their Children and Servants, with *Gideon* in another Case, *Look on me, and do likewise,* *Judg. i. 17.* and with the Apostle, *Phil. iii. 17-- Be Followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an Ensamble.* Then are Children and Servants like to be won over to a Compliance with the Will of the LORD in his Word

Word, when 'tis not only clearly held forth to them in *Word*, but when also 'tis pointed forth in a lively and *speaking Example*. If the Spirit of GOD gives us Ground, as it does, 1 Pet. iii. 1. to believe that a holy and shining Conversation, without the *Word*, may prove effectual towards the Winning over of Unbelievers, toward the Embracement of Religion, what may we expect, if the *Word* and such Teaching be joyned together! Surely, we might think to see somewhat else than what is to be seen at this Day. And O how hard will many find it, to answer for their Defects here, in that Day, when they shall stand at the Bar of GOD! Nay, would to GOD, we might not say, for their direct counteracting Duty, in both these Respects, while instead of instructing them in the Fear of the LORD, by Example and Precept, they run them forward, to a Course of Sin by both! O prodigious Villany! and yet common among Men, among Christians!

II. *Family Worship* is comprised under Family Religion, as a principal Part of it; every Family should be a little Church unto the LORD: And so we find Mention made of the Church of GOD in Houses, or of Families being Churches unto the LORD, *Greet, or salute the Church that is in thine House*, Rom. xvi. 5. and elsewhere; and, past all Doubt, every Family ought to be a Church, wherein GOD should be solemnly worshipped, both on ordinary and extraordinary Occasions; so *Job's House* was, *Job* i. 5. Now of this *Family Worship*, the more ordinary Parts are three.

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1. *Solemn Invocation* of the Name of GOD by Prayer. Our Lord teaches us, to *joyn together in Prayer*, by putting the Persons praying in the plural Number, in the *Lord's Prayer*, *Our Father which art in Heaven*. Again, *Give US this Day our daily Bread*. Our Dependence upon GOD, not only in our single Capacities, but as we are Members of Families, requires suitable Acknowledgments of the LORD; and our Want of Family Mercies requires our joyning in craving them by Prayer from the LORD. Our Guilt of Family Sins, requires Family Acknowledgments, and Applications for Pardon: And therefore assuredly Families, whether greater, as Nations, or lesser, which call not upon the Name of GOD, shall have the LORD'S Fury poured out upon them. *Jer. x. 25. Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and on the Families that call not on thy Name.* Where by Families we are to understand all Families, whether greater or lesser: For surely if Nations, in their national Capacity, be called to worship the LORD, and call upon his Name, so also lesser Families are; and for their Neglect, are liable to the same Vengeance.

2. *Solemn Reading* of the *Word* belongs to *Family Worship*. What can be more plain to this Purpose, than the Command we have formerly quoted from *Deut. vi. 6.* and this we are to do, that the *Word of the LORD* may dwell in us richly, in all Wisdom, *Col. iii. 16.*

3. *Solemn Praises* are also required, as a Part of Family Worship, and undoubtedly as Family
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ly Sins and Wants call for Family Prayer, so Family Mercies require Family Praises, and brings us under the Apostle's Injunction in that fore-cited, Col. iii. 16. *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all Wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs, singing with Grace in your Hearts to the LORD.*

III. It remains that we open the third and last Branch of Family Religion, to wit, *Family Government*; and this lies in several Particulars. (1.) In commanding the Family, Children, and Servants, to walk in all the Ways of Obedience: This is that which the LORD so highly praises in Abraham, Gen. xviii. xix. *I know him, saith the LORD, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the LORD, &c.* (2.) In obliging, by Reproof, Admonition, and Correction, such as are in the Family, to abandon any Thing sinful and scandalous, in their Practice. Gen. xxxv. 2. *Then Jacob said unto his Household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange Gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your Garments; And let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an Altar unto GOD, who answered me in the Day of my Distress, and was with me in the Way which I went.* Here, we have an eminent Example, both of Family Worship, and Family Order: And indeed, as to the Deportment, I mean, as to the outward Man, and what is to be seen of Servants and Children, we see from the Fourth Command, that Parents and Masters of Families

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lies are accountable for it to the LORD, who has not only enjoyn'd them to keep the Sabbath-day, but to take care that all within their Doors do. (3.) This lies in expelling such out of the Family as do, notwithstanding the Use of these Means for their Reformation, persist in walking contrary to GOD. *I will walk within my House with a perfect Heart.* Here is the Spring. See what follows. *He that walketh in a perfect Way, he shall serve me. He that worketh Deceit shall not dwell within my House: He that telleth Lies, shall not tarry in my Sight,* Psal. ci. 2, 6. Here we see a lively Character of one that has a true Regard to the Maintenance of Family Religion. How rare are such Instances in our Day! But leaving this we shall proceed.

II. The next Thing we proposed, 'was to shew whence it is, that such as are sincerely religious themselves, will be careful to maintain Family Religion. We might indeed, for the Proof of this Truth, have mentioned and illustrated the eminent Examples of pious Care about Family Religion, recorded in Scripture: But what we are to alledge, under this Head, will supersede that, and will sufficiently prove the Doctrine, and shew, that there is an indissoluble Tie betwixt Sincerity and a Regard to this.

I. Then, Persons who are themselves sincerely religious, will be careful to maintain Family Religion, because they have a Regard to all GOD's Commands. The Authority of the LORD, wherever it is stamp'd, binds them to a Compliance. Sincerity has for its inseparable Com-

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Companion, a Respect to all GOD's Commands: *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Commands,* says David, Psal. cxix. 6. And from this Respect to the Command it is, that a Care about Family Religion flows; for undoubtedly it is a Part of commanded Duty. We are here told, it is a Piece of Service to the LORD; and what is commanded, is only so. What he never requir'd, that he will never own as Service done to him; but what has been alledged and offered from the Word of GOD, under the former Head, puts this beyond Debate.

2. This Regard to the Maintenance of Family Religion, flows from the very Nature of that supernatural Principle wherewith all that are truly sincere are endued, which in Scripture is call'd, the *new Heart*, a *Heart of Flesh*, a *new Creature*, a *new Spirit*, &c. This Principle being suited and framed to an universal Compliance with the LORD's Will, aims at this in all Things. They who have it are said to be *created in Christ Jesus to good Works*, Eph. ii. 10. And particularly, as the old Heart would be in all Respects independent of the LORD, so, on the other Hand, this new Heart is strongly bent to acknowledge its Dependence on the LORD, in the Ways of his own Appointment, in all its Ways, in all Stations and Relations wherein 'tis put: And hence, as it leads to own the LORD in our single Capacity, so it leads us also, if we are possess'd of it, to do so in our Family Capacity; and, in a Word, as it leads us to worship and serve the LORD our selves, so it powerfully influences to lay

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lay out our selves to have all others to serve the same LORD, more especially such as we may have Influence upon, our Children and Servants.

3. Such as are sincere have an entire Love to the LORD, and hence a Delight in all Ordinances, private, as well as publick, and secret, wherein any Measure of Communion with the LORD may be reach'd. LORD, says David, Psal. xxvi.

8. *I have loved the Habitation of thy House, the Place where thine Honour dwelleth.* The LORD's

Honour dwelleth in all his Ordinances, and in every Place where he records his Name, *that is*, in every Ordinance, there he meets with his People, and there he blesteth them. And indeed by Family Religion the LORD is signally honoured; for thereby we (1.) acknowledge, That we hold our Families of the LORD, that it is to him we ow them, and say by our Practice, what worthy Jacob said, *Gen. xxxii. 10. O GOD of my Father Abraham, and GOD of my Father Isaac, I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth which thou hast shewed unto thy Servant; for with my Staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become Two Bands.* Again

(2.) We hereby own our Families, and all that we are, to be still in the Hand of the LORD, and at his sovereign Disposal; while all the Advantages and Mercies we want, and would have or enjoy, and would have continued with us, we apply to him for them by Prayer; and all the Evils we would have removed, or prevented, we likewise look to him for their Removal and Prevention, acknowledging him the Author of all our Mercies, in the continual Ascriptions of Praises

Praises to him. In this way we acknowledge plainly, that *of him, and through him* are all Things, in whose Hand is the Breath, and all the Concernments of every living Thing, who kills and makes alive, wounds and heals, makes rich and poor. And, in a Word, hereby we own him the uncontrollable Lord of all. *The LORD giveth, and the LORD taketh, and blessed be the Name of the LORD. He doth what pleased him; and who may say to him, What dost thou?* (3.) These Acknowledgments honour GOD, in that they are publick, whereby GOD's Glory is manifested to others, and they instructed, and excited by Example unto the like Acknowledgments. Assuredly therefore, they who love the Place where GOD's Honour dwells, and that which contributes toward its Manifestation, as all sincere Souls do, will not dare to neglect this Family Religion, whereby 'tis so signally furthered.

4. Such as are sincerely religious, will be careful to maintain Family Religion, because they have a sincere Love to those in their House. They love their Neighbour as themselves; and no way can Love manifest itself more, than in a due Care for their Salvation, leading to an Use of all those Means whereby this is promoted. Memorable to this Purpose are the LORD's Words concerning *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his Chi'dren and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the LORD, to do Justice and Judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath Spoken of him.* Here we have a double Conne-

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tion, very remarkable. (1.) A Connection betwixt Family Religion, a due Care of it, and its Success. He will command, and they shall keep the Way of the LORD; he will take due Care, and his Care shall not be in vain. *Train up a Child in the Way wherein he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* Ordinarily an universal Care this way is not altogether without some Influence upon some in the Family; and if we save one Child, one Servant by it, is not this a rich Reward for all the Attendance we can give to it? (2.) There is a Connection betwixt the Success, and the promised Blessings. *They shall keep the Way of the LORD, and the LORD will bring on Abraham, and his Seed, all the good Things that he has spoken.* So here we see of how great Consequence it is to those in our Families; 'tis the Way to make them religious, and that's the Way to make them happy.

3. Such as are sincere, will be careful to maintain Family Religion, from the Conscience of the Charge they have of them. Masters and Parents have the Charge of their Families, and are in some Measure accountable to God for them. Parents are commanded to train up their Children; and Masters are to command their Household to keep the Way of the LORD, as we see in the LORD's Testimony of *Abraham*. Thus we see, in the Fourth Command, the Master of the Family is obliged to see to the religious Observance of the Sabbath by all within his House, and so he has a Charge for which he is accountable to the great GOD: And therefore a sincere Person looks on himself as bound to be

careful to maintain the Worship of GOD in his Family, and amongst those whom he has the Charge of. This made holy *Job* concern'd to sacrifice for his Children: And the Neglect of paternal Duty in *Eli*, provok'd the LORD's Displeasure.

6. The Care of Persons, who are sincerely religious, to maintain Family Religion, flows from the Force of their solemn Engagements and Vows to the LORD in their Baptism, which are again renew'd, upon their offering Children to the LORD in that Ordinance. Here they are solemnly and deeply sworn to be the LORD's, and to walk with GOD, in and before their Families, to instruct them by Example and Precept. And this surely cannot be performed, where Family Religion is not taken Care of in all its Parts. How terrible will it be to Parents and Masters of Families, when their Children and Servants, from Generation to Generation, shall accuse them as faulty, and the Cause of their Want of Family Religion? Indeed, say they, we never worshipped GOD in our Families: Why? We never saw the Worship of GOD in our Father's, or Master's Families? How terrible will this be, when GOD shall say, Is it so? hast thou damn'd thy Child, thy Servant? Is this the Performance of the solemn Vows which thou tookst on before so many Witnesses? How confounded wilt thou then look? Other Things to this Purpose we may have Occasion to touch at afterwards. From what has been said, 'tis plain

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1. That all who are sincere, will undoubtedly be careful to maintain Family Religion.

2. Whence it is so. 'Tis from the Force of all these Ties we have mention'd, and others of the like Nature, we may afterwards have Occasion to mention.

We shall now make some practical Improvement of this Point. And

I. For *Information.*

We may draw from it the few following Inferences, amongst many. Is it so, *That such as are sincerely religious themselves, will be conscientiously careful about Family Religion?* Then

1. We have undoubtedly Reason to suspect their Religion, who are Triflers in this Matter: Since a suitable Concern about our own Salvation, and the Means leading thereto, leads to a due Concern about the Souls of our Families; no doubt, when we see Persons trifle here, it gives us Ground to be jealous, that they are not under a due Concern about their own Souls. Now, of Triflers in this Sort, who seem all to fall under that heavy Curse that is pronounced, *Jer. xlviii. 10.* against such as do the Work of the LORD negligently, there are Three Sorts. (1.) Such as do the Work of the LORD *by Parts*. They will, it may be, read a Chapter, but never a Word of Praying, or of singing Praises to the LORD, in their Families; tho' there is full as much Ground for the one, as for the other, from the Command of God, and from our own Necessities. The Reading of the Word

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is not like to turn to any great or good Account to us, if we joyn not Prayer for the LORD's Spirit, to cause us understand what we read. And he well understood this, who spent so great a Part of that long *Psal* cxix. in praying for Light. *Psal.* cxix. 18. *Open mine Eyes, that I may see Wonders out of thy Law,* is a Petition that should go along with the Reading of the Word. And indeed Praises ought not to be forgot, and Praise will be ever lookt on as *comely for the Upright.* *It is a good Thing to give Thanks to the Name of the LORD,* and the true Way it is to obtain much of him. Memorable, above many, are the Words of the Psalmist to this Purpose. *Let the People praise thee: O GOD, let all the People praise thee.* There is the Exhortation: Well, what follows on it? The ensuing Verse tells, *Then shall the Earth yield her Increase; and GOD, even our GOD, shall bless us,* *Psal.* lxxvii. 5, 6. All the Duties of Religion, whether domestick or publick, or secret, have a mutual Subserviency to one another, as well as a Tendency to promote the Design of all; and therefore one cannot be taken away, without a manifest Injury done to the rest, and done to the very Design. Such who deal thus, are undoubtedly Triflers, and are to be accounted Contemners of the LORD's Authority; for assuredly, if it were Regard to the LORD's Command, that made them careful of one Part, the same Regard and Deference to the LORD's Command would make them perform all the other Parts. If we cut and carve, take and leave, as we see meet, in those Things which are equally established by the

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the LORD, we do the Work of the LORD deceitfully; and *cursed is he that doth the Work of the LORD deceitfully.* Again (2.) Such are to be accounted Triflers, as do *seldom* worship GOD in their Families: It may be, on the Sabbath Night they will read, or sing, or so, but no more till the next Sabbath. They who confine all their Religion to the Sabbath, I dare say, they never kept the Sabbath duly. No doubt, we ought to worship GOD in our Families *daily*, we ought to confess our Sins, cry to him for a gracious Supply of all our Wants, and to praise him for his Mercy towards us. Surely, when we are bid *pray always with all Prayer*, Eph. vi. 18. this is at least to be understood, that we ought to be frequently employ'd in this Sort of Prayer, as well as any other. No less can be meant also, where we are bid, *1 Thess. v. 17. Pray without ceasing.* Undoubtedly therefore, Triflers they are, who do frequently neglect, who, upon every trifling Occasion, will baulk Family Religion, while there is every Day both a clear Call to it, and fair Occasion for it. The LORD's Mercies are new every Morning, and so are both our Sins and our Wants, and therefore so ought our Applications to GOD. *It is a good Thing to give Thanks unto the LORD, and to sing Praises to thy Name, O most High: To shew forth thy loving Kindness in the Morning, and thy Faithfulness every Night,* Psal. xcii. 1, 2. (3.) Such are Triflers, as, notwithstanding the clear Command we have to be *servant in Spirit serving the LORD*, do yet with a cold Indifferency, and even as they were asleep, manage this Work. Is this to serve the LORD

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with all our Strength, with all our Heart and Soul, as we are commanded? Nay, sure it is not. Let such take heed, who thus offer to the LORD a Carcase, a Form, who please themselves with the mere Performance of the Duties, without considering how they are performed; let such, I say, look with Trembling and Astonishment to that Word of the Prophet, *Cursed be the Deceiver, that hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the LORD a corrupt Thing,* Mal. i. last.

2. We may draw this Inference from it, That such as do entirely neglect Family Religion, are undoubtedly Strangers to Sincerity. Think on this, ye who to this Day never bow'd a Knee to GOD in your Families; undoubtedly ye are under a Mistake as to your Case, and, be your Thoughts of your selves what they will, GOD looks on you as Persons void of all Religion. For (1.) Is not Family Religion a Duty? Sure it is; all the LORD's People, in all Generations, have thought so; the LORD has approved them in it. *Abraham*, as we have heard, was highly commended for this. It is one of the noted Evidences, *Job* i. 5. of the Piety of *Job*, of whom GOD did, in a manner, glory. 'Tis plainly enjoyn'd in the Fourth Command, as judicious *Durham* solidly clears. But what need I say more? 'Tis so clear, that no Body denies it, who has any Sense of Religion; and even they who neglect it, must own it a Duty. Again (2.) Is not then your Neglect of it a Sin against Light, *that is*, a Sin of deeper than ordinary Dy, a blacker Hue, and consequently to be more

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more severely punished by the holy and jealous GOD? *He that knows his Master's Will, and doth it not, is to be beaten with many Stripes.* (3.) Is it a Sin you are only once guilty of in your Life? Nay, but it is a Sin ye are every Day guilty of. (4.) And is it consistent with any Thing of the Reality of Religion, to live in the constant and habitual Neglect of any Duty, or the Commis- sion of any known Sin? Nay, surely it is not; for the LORD is plain with us in this Matter, *He that committeth Sin, that is, who lives in a Course of Sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the Beginning. -- Whosoever is born of GOD, doth not commit Sin; for his Seed remain- eth in him: And he cannot sin, because he is born of GOD, John iii. 8, 9.* Vain therefore are all your Pretences to any Thing of the Reality of Religion, who live in the Neglect of Family Religion.

3. We may from this Doctrine learn whence it is that there is such a sad Neglect of Family Religion this Day. 'Tis from a Want of sincere personal Religion. Few there are, who are themselves under a due Concern about their own Souls; and hence it is, that there are so few careful about the Souls of their Families. Now, that this flows from a Defect of personal Religion, is plain beyond Contradiction, if we consider (1.) That where there is that Sincerity, that will not make ashamed, there undoubt- edly there is to be found a Regard, and an equal Respect to all GOD's Commands. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Com-*

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mands, Psal. cxix. 6. Again (2.) Experience shews, that they who are negligent in this Matter, are also careless about their own Souls: Look to it, ye who neglect Family Religion; I fear, ye are not careful about personal Religion. He that will easily baulk and neglect Family Prayer, will be as ready to neglect secret Prayer. This is well known in Experience. (3.) The very Excuses that they make use of for this Neglect, speak the Want of a Heart to it; for surely, when People are kept from a Thing, by frivolous and trifling Difficulties, 'tis a Sign they have no great Mind to it.

Object. (1.) Say some, We cannot pray, we never were taught to pray.

I answer (1.) If thou meanst that thou canst not do it as thou oughtst, very true; neither canst thou do any Duty: Wilt thou therefore give over all? (2.) Didst thou ever try it? did ye ever sit down with your Family, and make a Mint at it? What knowest thou, but it might have fallen out to thee, as to the Man with the withered Hand? If thou hadst made a fair Trial to pray, thou perhaps mightst have got Strength thou didst never expect. 'Tis Want of Will and Inclination, not of Strength and Ability, that hinders. (3.) Did ye ever cry to GOD to teach you? did ye ever, with the Disciples, cry, *Master, or Lord, teach us to pray*? If not, surely 'tis Want of Will that keeps you from Duty. Ye have no Mind to it. (4.) Can ye do any Thing? Yes, will ye say, we can work at our ordinary Employments. Well, but could ye do this at first? did ye not come to a Skill in these Things,
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after many fainter Essays, and Pains taken to learn? No doubt, ye did. Even so ye must learn to pray. (5.) Have ye any Sense of Family Sins, Family Mercies, or Family Wants? If ye have, sure I am, what ye are sensible of, ye can speak. Can ye tell your Neighbour? and may ye not also tell these Things to GOD? But

Obj. (2.) Say ye, When we come before GOD, we must speak well, and when we come before the great King, we must have Words in good Order; and now I cannot order my Words aright.

Ans. (1.) 'Tis not Words that GOD seeks. Many a Time he has rejected good Words, for want of a correspondent Frame of Heart, *Deut.* v. 29. but he never rejected a Prayer, because it was not right worded. (2.) I say, If thy Words express the real Sentiments of thy Heart, and thou be upon the Matter right, GOD will pass by many Indecencies and Failings in thy Words; so he did with *Job*: *Job* had many harsh Expressions concerning GOD, both to him, and of him; and yet because he was upon the Matter right, he passes by these Failings, while he reproves his three Friends. *Ye have not spoken of me the Things that are right, as my Servant Job, Chap. xlii. 6.* (3.) In Prayer, we address GOD as a Father, and we know Parents will not quarrel their Children in Nonage, tho' they lisp and speak after their own Way; nor will GOD be worse than our Parents in this Respect (4.) Utterance is GOD's Gift, and therefore, would ye have it? to the LORD ye must

must look for it. (5.) As far as thou understandest thy Needs, or the LORD's Mercies, and art affected with them, in so far ye will still find Words to express your Concern ; and if any Man teach you to speak beyond your Understanding and Concern, he teaches you to mock GOD. But (6.) if this hold, it strikes as well against secret Prayer, as Family Prayer, and so we must quit all Prayer.

Ob, ect. (3.) But say ye, Ah, I cannot get Confidence.

Ans. (1.) Will this Excuse bear you out at GOD's Hand ? Dare ye make it to him ? No, I am sure, ye dare not. (2.) Whether will it require greater Confidence to pray before your Family, or to stand at the Bar of GOD, and before Angels and Men, and tell ye had never Confidence to pray in your Families ? (3.) This is horrible Pride : Ye think ye cannot pray, so as to gain Repute, and because ye cannot gain your End, cursed Self, therefore ye rob GOD of his Glory. (4.) Whether is it that thou canst not get Confidence to pray before Men, or before GOD ? If thou say thou canst not get Confidence to pray to GOD, then ye should not pray in Secret either, nor yet in Publick. If thou say, 'tis before Men that thou art ashamed, then is not this horrible Impiety, to be more influenced by a foolish Regard to Man, than by a Regard to GOD ? If thou hast Confidence to appear before GOD, thou mayst easily appear before Men. Place but thy self under the Eye of GOD, and set thy self to Prayer, and then all Thoughts of Men will quickly be gone.

Object.

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Object. (4) But say some, We cannot get Time.

Ans. (1.) For what has GOD given thee Time? was it not to serve him, to save thine own Soul, and the Souls of thy Family? (2.) Whereon spendest thou thy Time? On thy Business or Family, wilt thou answer? Well, if so, this is the compendious, shortest and surest Way, to carry all forward. 'Tis the Way to get GOD with you, and then ye will be prosperous. Finally 'tis not true, for there's none of you all, but idle away, either upon no Business, or worse than none, more than this would require. Now this much for the Third Inference.

4. We may from our Doctrine draw this Inference, That Ministers have not the only Charge, *or all the Care and Charge of the Souls of People, Masters of Families and Parents have also a Charge.* And think on it, GOD will require at your Hands the Blood of your Children, and of your Servants, if they perish through your Negligence. Now that ye have the Charge, and are answerable to GOD for Children and Servants, is past all Contradiction: For (1.) Parents and Masters of Families have a considerable Interest with Servants and Children. Children and Servants pay somewhat of Reverence and Respect unto their Parents and Masters, and allow them some Interest in their Affection. Now all this Interest with them should be improved toward their Salvation and their Engagement in GOD's Service. (2.) Not only have ye an Influence upon them this Way, but ye have a
Power

Power of commanding them, and this should be improv'd likewise toward their Engagement in the LORD's Way. (3.) Ye have frequent Opportunities of conversing with them, and ye are accountable for the Improvement of these towards their Good, GOD expressly requiring your Care as to the Improvement of these, *Deut. vi. 6 and 7.* Finally (4.) Parents have a Charge directly given to them ; it is enjoyn'd *that they train up their Children in the Way of the LORD*; and to them it is that the LORD enjoyns the forming of the tender Years of their Posterity. GOD has plac'd his Testimonies amongst us ; and we are all, according to our respective Stations and Opportunities, obliged to propagate both the Knowledge and the Practice of them. *He established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers, that they should make them known to their Children ; that the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be born ; who should arise and declare them to their Children,* Psal. lxxviii. 5, 6.

II. Use. Of Lamentation.

This Doctrine may be improv'd for Lamentation. Is it so that such as are *themselves* sincerely religious, will be conscientiously careful to maintain Family Religion ? then surely we have Reason to lament the woful Neglect of this Duty, and of a due Regard unto it in the Day wherein we live. That this is either entirely neglected or lamentably trifled over by the

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Generality of Parents and Masters of Families in our Days, is, alas! too too evident. For (1.) The horrid and abounding Ignorance of GOD speaks it out. Were Parents conscientiously careful to train up their Children from their tender Years in the Knowledge of GOD, as they are commanded; were they speaking to them of the Things of GOD, when they sit in their Houses, when they walk in the Fields, when they ly down and rise up; and were these Beginnings cultivate by Masters of Families, when they get them home to be Servants; surely there would not be so much Ignorance of GOD this Day in the Land as there is. Again (2.) the abounding Impiety that there is in the Land, speaks few *Abrahams* to be in it, who will command their Children and their Servants to walk in the Ways of the LORD. Magistrates are no doubt faulty, and Ministers too; but the Rise of all is the Negligence of Parents and Masters of Families, and at their Hand will the LORD require it. (3.) The Impiety of young Ones in particular, speaks this aloud. O how sadly doth it speak the Wickedness of Parents, when their Children do lisp out Oaths as soon as they begin to speak, when Children talk obscenely as soon as they begin to converse; it tells us their Parents have not done, and do not their Part. Finally, 'tis what cannot be denied, 'tis what ye must confess, because there are too many Witnesses of its Truth, even as many Children, as many Servants, as many Sojourners as there are in many of your Families, as many Witnesses there are

are against most of you, that ye either perfectly trifle in this; or totally neglect Family Religion.

Now surely we have Reason heavily to lament this, and to mourn over it. For

1. It gives us a sad Character of the present Generation. It tells us what Sort of Persons most Part of Parents and Masters of Families are in the Day wherein we live, even that they are destitute of any Thing of real and sincere Respect unto the LORD and his Service; and tho' they be called Christians, yet really they know not Christ; nor are they careful to honour him, or engage others to do it: Nay more, that they are horribly perjured, because solemnly sworn to instruct by Precept and Example, and even to train up their Children and Families in Acquaintance with the LORD; and yet they make no Conscience of performing what they have vowed to the LORD, the most high GOD.

2. We have Reason to lament this, because it gives us a sad Prospect of the rising Generation. Who shall form the rising Generation? Who shall train them up in the Knowledge of the LORD, and engage them to the Way of the LORD? It may be ye will say, Let Ministers do it. But ah! if others do not their Part, all that Ministers can do will not prevail. Ministers are little with them. Ministers have many to attend. Ministers are called to preach the Word, to attend to the Exercise of Discipline, and this takes much of their Work and Time

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Time. But Parents and Masters of Families, they have few only to look to, they are much with them, have more Interest with them, and more Access to notice them: And if they improve not these Advantages, the rising Generation is not like to transmit to their Posterity a good Account of Religion. This Generation is sensibly worse than the former; and we may expect the next to be worse; and GOD knows where this Neglect is like to land us ere long, even in downright Atheism.

3. This is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation, because of the dreadful and heavy Doom 'tis like to bring on us altogether. *Eli's* Neglect cost him and his dear. What sad Things this may in Time bring upon Parents and Children, Families, Congregations and Nations, GOD only knows. But sure I am, it will make the Day of Judgment a terrible Day to many of them. When Children and Servants shall go, as it were, in Sholes to the Pit, cursing their Parents and their Masters, who brought them there. And Parents and Masters of Families shall be in Multitudes plunged headlong in endless Destruction, because they have not only murdered their own Souls; but also imbrued their Hands in the Blood of their Children and Servants. O how doleful will the Reckoning be amongst them at that Day! When the Children and Servants shall upbraid their Parents and Masters. *Now now, we must to the Pit, and we have you to blame for it; your cursed Example, and lamentable Negligence has brought us to the Pit. We never saw you worship GOD your selves, and ye never*
worship

worshipped GOD in your Families. Ye did not instruct us in the Way of the LORD, nor train us up to it, and now we are indeed ruined and damned for our Sins; but our Blood lies at your Doors who might have done much to have saved us, but did it not. And on the other Hand, how will the Shrieks of Parents fill every Ear? *I have damn'd my self, I have damn'd my Children, I have damn'd my Servants. While I fed their Bodies, and clothed their Backs, I have ruined their Souls, and brought double Damnation on my self.* O let us mourn over this sad Evil that will undoubtedly have this dismal and terrible Issue. What can affect your Hearts, if this do not?

4. Let us lament what none can seriously look upon, and not lament, even a perishing Generation, a ruined and destroyed Multitude, and that not without the most terrible Aggravations of their Misery. (1.) Is it not lamentable to see Children and Servants fettered in Chains of Darkness, and reserved in them to Judgment, to see them driven, as it were, to Damnation and Death eternal? (2.) Is it not yet more dreadful to see them destroyed by these who are under the strongest Ties to endeavour their Relief? (3.) Is it not sad to see them, who pretend Love to their Children, and Servants, hugging a Bit of Clay, their Bodies I mean, while they are damning their immortal Souls? Surely this is to be lamented, and that it is not more noticed and bewailed, will ere long occasion a bitter Lamentation. But we proceed next to a

III. Use

III. Use. Of *Reproof*; and that

1. To such as trifle in this Duty.
2. To such as halve Family Religion.
3. To such as totally neglect it.
4. To such as, instead of Family Religion, do live in Family Wickedness.

1. Then we say this reaches a *Reproof* to such as do trifle in Family Religion: Some there are who make the Fashion, at least of attending all the Duties of it, but with such Faintness, Deadness, and Coldness, as says their Duty is their Burden, and not their Choice. They can scarce tell what Advantage they make of it. Such our Doctrine reproves, and faulty ye are. For,

(1.) This says that personal Religion is either altogether wanting, or under a sad Decay. Personal and Family Religion go together; as there is an Increase in Zeal, and Carefulness about the one, so there will be about the other. When *David* looked well to himself, when he behaved himself wisely in a perfect Way, he then also walked within his House with a perfect Heart, *Psal. ci. 2.* Surely your trifling in Family Religion is the genuine Fruit of trifling in private and personal Religion.

(2.) Ye deprive your selves of the Comfort of Family Religion. The LORD has not said to the Seed of *Jacob*, *Seek ye me in vain*; nay, he is good to the Soul that seeks him, to them that wait for him. In keeping his Commands there is great Reward; but they who trifle, miss this

great Reward ; for he only is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6.

(3.) Ye miss the Mark, ye do not reach the Scope and Intendment of these Duties, the Engagement of your Families to the LORD. It will not be a coldrise and formal Performance of Duty that will either please GOD, or profit your selves, or gain others.

(4.) Faulty ye are to a high Degree ; ye provoke the LORD to Anger. GOD is a Spirit, and he requires those who worship him, to do it in Spirit and in Truth. We must be fervent in Spirit serving the LORD. He spues the lukewarm out of his Mouth, and has pronounced a Curse against these who serve him with the worst. *Cursed be the Deceiver who hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth to GOD a corrupt Thing,* Mal. i. ult.

2. This Doctrine reaches a Reproof to such as *halve* Family Religion. Some there are who will not entirely omit, nor yet will they entirely perform. They go a Part of the Way with GOD, but they will not go the whole. To such we say.

(1.) Ye disjoyn what the LORD has joyn'd. The whole Law of the LORD is knit together ; and all the Parts of it are subservient to each other : And it is remarkably so with respect to Family Religion ; and particularly with respect to Family Worship. Prayer obtains from the LORD Influences of Light, whereby we are made to understand his Word : And Discoveries of the LORD in the Word fill our Mouths with the high Praises of the LORD. Let no Man there-

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therefore separate these which the LORD has joyn'd.

(2.) Ye betray Naughtiness of Heart. A sincere Heart counts GOD's Commands all of them to be right concerning all Things. They who have not a Respect to all the LORD's Commands, shall, when they are tried, be exposed to just Shame and Contempt, *Psal.* cxi. 6. Now, while ye thus pick out some and reject others, ye practically declare how naughty your Heart is.

(3.) Ye trample upon the Authority of the LORD in the Command. *He that breaks one is guilty of all.* If the LORD's Authority were the Motive that induc'd you to do the one Part of this Duty, it would also prevail with you to do the other. If the true Reason why ye read a Chapter sometime in your Family, were because the LORD commands it, ye would for the very same Reason pray in your Families. 'Tis not the Authority of the LORD that sticks with you, otherwise it would be in all Respects of the like and equal Consideration, and Weight with you. This is not that which prevails with you, and therefore ye are guilty of signal Contempt of the LORD.

(4.) Ye lose even what ye do. GOD will have all or none. Ye must either receive or reject all his Laws. He will allow no Man to pick and chuse; and since ye are not clear for all, ye will be no better of all the Lengths ye go. Instead therefore of a Reward for what ye have done, ye may expect to be sent to the Pit for what has been left undone.

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3. This Doctrine reaches a sad and sharp Re-
proof to the total Neglecters of Family Religion,
And even of this Sort there are not a few. Some
there are, it may be, hearing, who have liv'd some
Ten, some Twenty Years and upwards in a Fa-
mily, and never a Word all the while of any
Thing like Family Religion. To such we say,

(1.) Ye are going in the clear Way to Destru-
ction. You heard us prove from the most solid
Scripture Evidence, that where there is Heart
Sincerity, any Thing of real personal Godliness,
there will be also a conscientious Care to main-
tain the Worship of GOD, and all the Parts of
Family Religion.

(2.) As if that were not enough, ye do what
in you lies, to ruine the Souls of your Children
and Families. He as really is guilty of the Mur-
der of his Son or Servant, who neglects his In-
struction, as he is who stabs a Dagger to his
Heart.

(3.) What in you lies ye do to frustrate the
Gospel, and make Ministers lose their Pains.
Then is the Gospel like to be successful towards
the Salvation of Souls, when every one doth his
Part: But ye are so far from furthering the
Gospel; that ye joyn Issue with the God of this
World in blindfolding the Children of Men, lest
the glorious Light of the Gospel should shine
into their Minds.

(4.) Ye sin against the LORD with a high
Hand: Ye say upon the Matter, that he shall not
dwell in your House, when ye refuse to invite
him in, and to urge his Stay.

4. To

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4. To those this Doctrine reaches a Rebuke, who not only neglect Family Religion, but who, I may say, maintain Family Irreligion, and instruct their Families to neglect the LORD and his Service.

(1.) By the Neglect of Family Worship. Children and Servants who never see any Thing like the Worship of GOD in the Families wherein they live, and who are not instructed in the Way of the LORD, are thereby laid open to the Conduct of their own Hearts, and taught also to neglect it.

(2.) By Example of many Parents, Children and Servants are taught to go a greater length: Not only see the Worship of GOD neglected, Family Religion trifled over and slighted; but they see their Parents and Masters living careless of personal Religion, neglecting secret Prayer, reading of the Word: Nay, more, living in the Practice of known Sin, drinking, swearing, speaking profanely. Here is the Example, and readily is it follow'd by corrupt Nature. Children and Servants are ready to write after this Copy, *Jer. xlv. 16, 17. As for the Word that thou hast spoken to us in the Name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee: But we will certainly do whatsoever Thing goeth out of our own Mouth, to burn Incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out Drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our Fathers, our Kings and our Princes in the Cities of Judah and Streets of Jerusalem: For then had we Plenty of Victuals, and were well, and saw no Evil.*

(3.) Children are not only by many Parents drawn on to Sin, but by some even cherish'd in it. While they laugh at, and excuse, and sometimes tempt their Children to Iniquity.

(4.) Children are misled by Parents not correcting them, and that severely for Sin. Folly is bound up in the Heart of a Child, but the Rod of Correction will drive it away: And therefore he that spares the Rod hates the Child. *Eli* stands a Monument of the terrible Consequences of Indulgence of Children in Ill.

These and such Ways do many in our Day teach both Children and Servants Irreligion. Now, to such we say,

(1.) Is it not enough that ye your selves joyn Issue with Satan, but will ye thus draw others into the Confederacy? Ye are not only against the LORD, but ye are Ringleaders in the Way to Destruction.

(2.) Not content to draw others, ye drive your Children and Servants to Sin: And is it not enough to destroy your own Souls, unless ye openly and evidently murder your Families?

(3.) Is it not enough that ye banish GOD your House, but will ye banish him the World? This is the plain Tendency of what ye do. Ye are as they who poison a Fountain. By poisoning your Children and Servants, ye poison, it may be, those who are to be the Heads of many Families, and thereby spread, or at least contribute your utmost toward the spreading Destruction through the World, and that to all succeeding Generations.

Finally.

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Finally. That I may shut up this Use of *Reproof*, we shall put all the Four Sorts of Persons we have nam'd, together, and we have a four-fold heavy Charge against them.

1. We say, ye are guilty of horrid Cruelty. He that doth not what in him lies for preventing Sin in his Neighbour, hates him, in GOD's account, in his Heart. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart ; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him, Lev. xix. 17. And he that hates his Brother in the least Degree, is by our Lord accounted a Murderer, and adjudged to Punishment, Matth. v. 21.* Now, according to this Law, and righteous it is, ye are guilty of dreadful Cruelty ; not against an Enemy, but against your Friends ; not against your Neighbour, but your own Children ; not against their Bodies, but their Souls. To neglect a due Care of them, is to murder their Souls ; and verily ye have the Blood of their Souls on you.

2. Ye are guilty of the most horrid Perjury. How oft have some of you sworn, with Hands lifted up to the most high GOD, before many Witnesses, to serve the LORD, to worship him? Every Child ye have baptized, ye solemnly vow'd to serve the LORD, and to cause your Houses to do so. But all the Vows of GOD cannot tie you. Well, the Time hastens on apace, when the Breach of solemn Vows of this Nature will fall heavy upon you, and the LORD will avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant. And surely this will end in your utter Destruction.

3. Ye are guilty of denying the Faith, and are indeed worse than Infidels, 1 Tim. v. 8. *But if any Man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* Now sure, if he who neglects the Care of his House in Temporals, be guilty of this, much more he who is guilty this way in Spirituals.

4. Ye are guilty of an horrid Rejection of the LORD and his Yoke, in that (1.) Ye will not stoop to his Authority in all his Commands. (2.) In that ye openly contemn his Authority before Children and Servants, and Sojourners. And (3.) Ye induce others to do the like, and at least by your Example do encourage others to contemn the LORD; and that such as are most likely to be swayed by it, and even such as you are especially bound to train up in the LORD's Service.

Now surely, when these Four are taken together, as they are Ground of a just Reproof; so they will, if Repentance prevent not, be a just Ground for a terrible Sentence in the great Day; and therefore consider of it in Time, and betake your selves to the LORD by the Exercise of Repentance. But this I leave.

IV. Use. Of Exhortation.

It now only remains, that we improve this Truth in a Way of Exhortation. Is it so that such as are themselves sincerely religious will be conscientiously careful to maintain Family Religion? then surely all, as they would not be thought either

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either irreligious, or unsound in Religion, are obliged to maintain Family Religion.

Masters of Families, I shall here address you in a Matter of the highest Concernment to your Souls, and those of your Family : Set up Family Religion : Make Conscience of it in all its Parts ; and be in earnest in this Matter, we beseech and obtest you : For,

I. The LORD commands you to do so. The Authority of GOD enjoying it in all its Parts, will be Motive enough to any who have subjected themselves unto the LORD, taken his Yoke upon them, and surrendered themselves to his Conduct. I need not stand to mention particular Testimonies for Proof of this, having already done it in the doctrinal Part of this Discourse: I shall only add that one Exhortation of *Moses* the Man of GOD, to the People of *Israel*, *Deut. iv. 9.* *On'y take heed to thy self, and keep thy Soul diligently, lest thou forget the Things which thine Eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy Heart all the Days of thy Life : but teach them thy Sons and thy Sons Sons.*

II. For your upstirring to this Duty, consider, that, as the whole of Religion is a reasonable Service, so this in particular is highly so. The LORD demands nothing that can be denied, without the most unreasonable Wickedness and the Height of Injustice.

1. Surely there is nothing more reasonable than Family Instruction. Dost thou think it reasonable that thou feed and clothe thy Children and Servants, and is it not fully as much reasonable that thou shouldst instruct them in the Things

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Things that belong to their everlasting Peace? Sure it is. But to clear this yet a little further, take only these few Particulars to Consideration.

(1.) Your Children are all born ignorant, like the wild Ass's Colt, *Job xi. 12.* Children, as when born they know not the Ways and Means of maintaining themselves in natural Life, so they are ignorant of all that concerns their spiritual Life. Nor can they understand how to live, without they be taught, far less how to provide for the Life of their Souls.

(2.) As they have not Knowledge, so this their Want of it must be ruining to them, if not made up by seasonable Instruction: That the Soul be without Knowledge is not good. A Man cannot be without the Knowledge of what concerns the present Life, without considerable Prejudice, far less without the Knowledge of those Things that concern the Life of his Soul. *The LORD comes in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not GOD, and obey not the Gospel; who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the LORD, and the Glory of his Power, 2 Thess. i. 8.*

(3.) Some one or other therefore must instruct your Families in the Knowledge of GOD, else they perish eternally. Knowledge of these Things is absolutely necessary, and how can they get this, unless some Body teach them? Nay, I may say, not only is Instruction requisite, but a considerable Care and Diligence is necessary. Religion, and the Truths that concern it, are not all to be learn'd at one Lesson. Nay, but it will require frequent Instructions: Precept must be upon

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upon Precept, Line upon Line, and here a little and there a little. There must be a Speaking of the Things of GOD when we go out and when we come in, when we sit down and when we rise up, as it is enjoyn'd, *Deut. vi. 6, &c.* if we would have them to stick. So dull is Man, that he is not taught the easiest Arts or Sciences without great Pains, much less is it then to be expected, that he should learn supernatural and divine Truth, without much Care about his Instruction.

(4.) As Children want naturally the Knowledge of GOD, which yet they must have or perish, and which they cannot obtain without they be instructed; so none are in such Case and so much concern'd to instruct them as Parents. For (1.) None are so nearly related to them as Parents are. Man, Woman, what is thy Child but a Piece of thy self? And who so much concern'd to have every Thing that is needful provided for thee as thou thy self art and ought to be? (2.) None have such a fair Opportunity as thou hast. For 'tis but little others can be with them, but thou art with them when they ly down and rise up, go out and come in, and so hast the best and most Opportunities for this End. (3.) None else has such Access to know the Temper of Children and Servants, and this goes a great Way in the Instruction of Children and others. They who know their Tempers and Capacities are in best Case to deal with them. (4.) None are like to prevail so far with them, because none has such an Interest in their Affections. The more we love the Master, the better will his Lesson be learn'd. (5.) None are like

like to be so much the better for it, if thy Children and Servants be instructed in the Way of the LORD, as thou. To whom will the Profit, to whom will the Comfort come? Surely to thee. *Prov. x. 1. A wise Son maketh a glad Father. (6.)* None are so much concern'd, because none are like so to smart by it, if thy Children or Servants miscarry. *A foolish Son is the Heaviness of his Mother, Prov. x. 1.* And frequently, a Son that causeth Shame is the Name given to such. Now, to whom doth he cause Shame and Sorrow, is it not to his Parents? Surely it is: *For he that begetteth a Fool doth it to his Sorrow, Prov. xvii. 21.* Many other Considerations I might add, to shew none so much concern'd, nor so much obliged as Parents and Masters of Families in regard of the Dependence of Children and Servants upon them, and in regard of the Access they have to deal with Children before they are prepossess'd with Prejudices. But I proceed,

2. Nor is *Family Worship* less reasonable than *Family Instruction*. For

(1.) There is in every Family, and, I may say, every Day a visible Ground for it in all its Parts. *Every Family is daily loaded with new Mercies that are common to all the Family,* and redound to the Advantage of the whole; surely then, 'tis but reasonable that there should be an Acknowledgment of the LORD as the Author of those Mercies; and his Goodness should be celebrate in Songs of Praise. Every Day Family Sins are; and therefore Need there is of Pardon, of Confession, of Repentance. Family Wants

call

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call still for Family Supplications: And the Snares, Dangers, and Darknes of the Way, require a daily Attendance to the Word, as the unerring Guide of your Way.

(2.) As there is daily Reason for all the Parts of it, so there is a Reason for a joynt and publick Performance of all those Duties. (1.) All the Family are Witnesses of the LORD's Goodness in his bestowing Mercies, of his Justice in inflicting Strokes, of their own Sins and Wants, and Darknes: And therefore we ought publicly, and together, to acknowledge God's Goodness and Justice, and our Faith in his Mercy and Bounty. Since the Family are Witnesses of the one, they ought to be so of the other also. (2.) Since in your Family Capacity ye do rejoyce for one another, and sorrow with one another; since, I say, ye should bear a Part with each other, both in Prayer and Praises, there ought to be a publick Testification of this, and ye ought to joyn together for this End.

(3.) *Masters of Families* should undoubtedly acquaint all in their Family with the GOD of their Fathers; and no Way so effectual for this End, as to bring them all and frequently to the LORD in the Duties of his own Appointment, in which his Power and Glory are to be seen.

(4.) All who have Families should, before the World, own themselves every way dependent on the LORD, and acknowledge him in all their Ways. And this is the true Way to answer their Duty in this Matter.

3. There

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3: There is full as good Reason for Family Government, as for any of the rest. For,

(1.) To glorify God and to enjoy him, is the chief End of Man, and that which he ought to aim at ; as in all other Things that he doth, so particularly in entering into Family Society. Our Families surely, and all our Concerns should be so ordered as to contribute some way toward the Furtherance of our eternal Advantage.

(2.) This End can never be obtained, unless all in the Family be tied to walk according to that Rule, which the LORD has given us, as the Way toward the Enjoyment of himself.

(3.) Any in the Family who walk not according to the LORD's Will in this Matter, they do *counteract* that which all the Family should design ; and therefore if they will persist in that Course, they ought to be expell'd the Family. In a Word, to be somewhat more plain, what can be more reasonable, than that all who live in your Family, should be obliged to look to the Advantage of the Family ; and that such as will not do so, should be turned out of it ? And surely every Sin allowed, has a visible Tendency to bring down Ruin on the Family. Now this much for the second Motive ; we proceed to a

III. As the LORD's Command, and the Reasonableness of the Thing should have Weight, so I would have you consider next, that this is a Path the LORD's People have in all Generations trode. If thou expect to have their End, thou must walk in their Way, and go by the Footsteps of the Flock,

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Flock, and surely they will all lead you to a careful Attendance upon the LORD in the whole of this Duty. To which of the Saints will ye turn, if ye mean to countenance your self in a Neglect of this? Sure none of them. You will find godly *Abraham*, we have frequently cited, *Jacob* and *Joshua*, *Job* and *David* we have already mentioned also, and they are followed by the Saints in all Generations.

IV. Consider that a due Care for the Maintenance of Family Religion is necessary. For evincing your Sincerity, would ye be satisfied that the World look on you as either void of all Religion, or not sound in it? And what Peace do ye, can ye promise your selves, while Conscience has this to throw in your Teeth, that ye live either in the Neglect, or superficial Performance of a known Duty? How can ye satisfy any other or your selves, that ye have any Regard at all to that Sum of the second Table of the Law, that requires you to *love your Neighbour as your self*: I say, who will believe that the Man will love his Neighbour as himself, who loves not his Child, his Servant? And who will, or can justly believe, that thou lovest Child or Servant, while thou takes no Care of their Souls? 'Tis impossible that thou canst satisfy either others, or your selves, that ye are in earnest about Religion, while ye fail here.

V. For thy further *Excitement*, know, that the *Vows of GOD* are upon you to this Matter. Ye are *solemnly sworn*, not only when ye your selves were offered to the LORD, but when ye offered your *Children*; and when ye were married
also,

also, then ye entred the Relation, and then ye engaged to all the Duties that it doth draw after it. Now, can ye bear the Reproach of Perjury, of Breach of solemn Vows to the LORD? Now, here there is a signal Defect, and here I would put a Question to you all who have thus engaged to a Performance of all Duties. When ye did vow, were ye really resolved to do what ye promised? If not, ye have mocked GOD after the boldest Manner. If ye were then, what has altered your Resolution? Mind, GOD has no Pleasure in Fools; and the Man who shall ascend to the Hill of GOD, is he that sweareth, and changeth not.

VI. Consider the great Advantages which attend conscientious Diligence in performing this Duty, and that to your selves your Children, your Servants, and the Publick.

1. I say, Ye shall be Gainers. Every Part of Religion has its own Reward. *Godliness is profitable for all Things*, and every Piece of it is profitable for some valuable End and Purpose. Now, this remarkable Part of Religion is profitable for thy self many Ways: For (1.) In all the Duties of Family Religion, thou mayst have Communion with the LORD, *who said not to the Seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.* He never bid his People set about any Duty, but that wherein he was to be enjoyed. And there are this Day on GOD's Earth some who can say, as in the Sight of GOD, That some of the sweetest Opportunities they ever had on Earth, were Family Occasions; and that never did they more remarkably enjoy the LORD's Presence, than

in Family Worship. Some of considerable Quality we have known go into Eternity, blessing GOD for Family Religion, and others will do so. (2.) 'Tis the Way for thee to win Souls, and this is of great Advantage to thee. He that winneth Souls, is wise; and they who turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars in the Firmament for ever and ever. And surely, if thou win a Soul of a Son or Servant, thou shalt have the Advantage and Comfort of it doubly. To have contribute toward the Salvation of any, gives much Pleasure; much more to have done so toward the Advantage of a Child or Servant. Again (3.) If thou art successful, and dost gain them, surely it redounds to thy Advantage; for it will conciliate and engage their Affection much to thee, lay a powerful Enforcement to Obedience on them, and engage them to improve their Interest at the Throne of Grace on your behalf, and procure a Blessing from the LORD to thy Family. (4.) If they be not engaged, yet thy Respect to GOD, in witnessing for him, and cleaving to him, when tempted by so strong a Discouragement as the universal Backwardness of thy Family is, shall not go without a Reward. (5.) Surely, since the LORD, we find, would bless a Family for the sake of a religious Servant, as we find the LORD blessed *Poriphar's* House for *Joseph's* sake, *Gen. xxxix. 5.* and *Laban's* House for *Jacob's* sake he will no less, if not more, bless a House on account of a religious Master of a Family. (6.) It is the true Way to obtain Honour and Respect from the LORD, and even Intimacy with him. This put

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Abraham on GOD's Secrets, *Gen.* xviii. 18. When GOD was to do a great Work of Justice, he would not conceal it from *Abraham*, because he was one that would, he knew, make Conscience in particular of this Duty. Finally, the true Method to make dutiful Children and Servants, is to engage them to GOD's Way. If once they come to have a due Regard for the LORD, they will learn soon to pay a due Respect to Parents and Masters.

2. This Family Religion will be no less profitable to thy Children; and, ye know, their Gain should be accounted Gain by you. Every Parent should be of *John's* Mind, 3d. *Epiit. Ver.* 4. *I have no greater Joy, than to hear that my Children walk in the Truth;* and that particularly, because it contributes to their Advantage, and that many Ways. (1.) 'Tis GOD's Way, the Means of his Appointment toward their Engagement in the LORD's Way. *Train up a Child in the Way that he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it,* *Prov.* xxii. 6. The Way to engage them to the LORD, is, to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD, *Eph.* vi. 4. And what can be so much to their Advantage, as Peace and Acquaintance with GOD, whereby Good shall come to them, in Time, and to Eternity? (2.) If this be not reach'd, yet 'tis a Way that will not readily fail of keeping them from running to the same Excess of Riot with others, whereby they make themselves a Disgrace to their Parents, and all concern'd in them. It would be a Check to them, whereby they might be kept from adventuring upon

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upon these bold Heights that some run to. I remember, the noble Lord *Russel*, Son to the Marquis of *Bedford*, in his Speech on the Scaffold, *July 21. 1683.* blesses God for religious Education. "For, *says he*, even when I minded it least, it still hung about me, and gave me Checks, and hath now for many Years so influenced and possess'd me, that I feel the happy Effects of it in this my Extremity."

(3.) Though the Advantage may never be seen by you, yet it may lay a Foundation for their Happiness, when far from you. Good Education may be like Seeds in the Ground, which may ly dead till a Shower come, and then it will bud and bring forth Fruit. It may be, when thy Eyes are shut, and thy Children in some far Country, God may tryst them with some awakening Providence, that may put Life in the Seed thou hast sown. 'Tis the Unhappiness of many in this Day, that they are not acquainted with the first Principles of Religion; and therefore, when Evil befalls them afar off, or among Persons ignorant of God, whither their Wickedness drives them, then there is nothing in them to work upon. Providences that are the most rousing, are like Showers falling upon Earth, without Seed in it, that surely will have no Product.

3. We have likewise an Inducement to this, from its Advantage to Servants. Servants are call'd Children in Scripture: *Naaman's* Servants call him *Father*, 2 *Kings* v. 13. and no doubt a fatherly Care there should be of Servants. They are undoubtedly at least to come in amongst the

first Rank of *Neighbours*, whom ye should love as your self. Now, they have a double Advantage. (1.) 'Tis the Way to bring them to saving Acquaintance with the LORD. Abraham *will command his House after him, and they shall keep the Way of the LORD*, Gen. xviii. 11. (2.) 'Tis the Way to make him useful as a Servant to thee; and what he doth this way, is both his Advantage and thine. (3.) When he comes to be a Master, 'tis like to engage him to the same Course; and this will be not only his, but his Posterity's Advantage.

4. The Advantage of this to the Publick, both Church and State, should invite you; For, consider (1.) Hereby you train up Persons fit to serve GOD and their Country faithfully, in publick Employments either in Church or State; (2.) Hereby ye propose a good Example to engage others to those Ways that are for the Good and Honour of the State. They that are good Christians, will ever be good Subjects. (3.) Thou contributest a notable Part toward the Maintenance both of Church and State, in as much as thou endeavourest, as far as thy Power reaches, to keep the Subjects of either of them up in their Fear of GOD, and their Duty toward both Church and Commonwealth.

VII. On the other Hand, consider the sad and lamentable Consequences of a Neglect in this Matter, with respect to your Children and Servants, your self and the Publick.

1. I say, Consider the sad Disadvantages with respect unto the Children themselves. They are left (1.) destitute of that which is most profitable

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able and useful for them, in Time, and after Time : For *Godliness is profitable for all Things, having the Promises of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* (2.) They are expos'd, as it were, to wild Beasts. If you will not educate them in the Way of the LORD, the Devil and their own Corruptions will educate them in the Way to Hell ; if ye will not teach them to pray, the Devil will teach them to swear. A young Man, void of Understanding, is a Prey to every destroying Lust. See *Prov. vii. 6, 7, &c.* (3.) Not only so, but hereby they are, as it were, hedged and fenced against both Ordinances and Providences, through their Ignorance of GOD, and the Principles of Religion ; they can be bettered by neither of them.

2. 'Tis sadly disadvantageous with respect unto the Publick : For (1.) The Publick loses the Use and Advantage, which either Church or State might have had by them, if they had been duly educate. Again (2.) Instead of being helpful, they are hurtful. (3.) Not only hurtful, but even destructive and ruining : For to corrupt a Family, is in effect to corrupt a Nation ; because a Family quickly spreads itself, and is like to carry this Plague along with it.

3. 'Tis sadly disadvantageous to you : For (1.) 'Tis not like that your Children shall prove, as they otherwise might, the Stay and Comfort of your old Age ; 'tis not probable, that they who have not been dutifully us'd by you, shall use you dutifully. *Lycurgus* made a Law, that Children, which were not well educate, should not provide for their Parents when old. (2.)

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They are like to procure thee Sorrow, in as much as they are like to run to Evil, and fall into Mischief; which will be so much the heavier to thee, because thou art faulty in it. The *Switzers* have a Law, That, when Children are guilty of any capital Offences, Parents are to be the Executioners, to teach that they are to blame in this Matter. (3.) They are like, not only to perish, but to sink you with them. They will be as so many Millstones tied about your Neck, to make you sink the deeper under the Wrath of GOD: And your Misery will for ever be increas'd, by the Accession you have had to theirs.

Now, for your Help in this Duty, I shall conclude with Two or Three Advices.

1. Would ye deal to any Purpose in this Matter? Then be sure that ye be personally religious.

2. Begin early to be so; put off no Time, but set about the Study of it now.

3. Study much the Worth of Souls, the Worth of Children and Servants Souls.

4. Learn well the Meaning of that Command, *Love thy Neighbour as thy self.*

Finally. Study to be lively in Religion, and then ye will go on without Constraint.

Now, upon the Whole, consider; and if it seem evil to you this Day to serve the LORD, choose ye whom ye will serve: But, through Grace, the Advice I give, I resolve to follow: *But as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.*



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